Basic information

2005/2189(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products **Subject** 3.15.06 Fishing industry and statistics, fishery products 3.70.17 European ecolabel and ecolabelling, ecodesign 4.60.02 Consumer information, advertising, labelling	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	FRAGA ESTÉVEZ Carmen (PPE-DE)	15/09/2005

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	RIES Frédérique (ALDE)	14/12/2005

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	2793	2007-04-16

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	BORG Joe

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/06/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0275	Summary
27/10/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/06/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
23/06/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0219/2006	
06/09/2006	Debate in Parliament		
07/09/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0347/2006	Summary

07/09/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
07/09/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		
16/04/2007	Debate in Council		Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2005/2189(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/6/30440

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE362.792	23/02/2006	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE368.005	26/04/2006	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE374.007	02/05/2006	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0219/2006	23/06/2006	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0347/2006	07/09/2006	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2005)0275	29/06/2005	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0237/2006	14/02/2006	

Launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products

2005/2189(INI) - 07/09/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Carmen **FRAGA ESTÉVEZ** (EPP-ED, ES) on the Commission communication launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products. The resolution was adopted by 536 votes in favour to 27 against with 10 abstentions. (Please see the summary of 21/06/2006.)

Launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products

2005/2189(INI) - 16/04/2007

The Council held an exchange of views on the Commission's Communication on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries, on the basis of a Presidency questionnaire.

1) As regards the type of schemes, most delegations indicated that they were in favour of establishing minimum requirements for voluntary eco-labelling schemes (option 3).

2) Apart from the provisions that eco-labelling schemes should be transparent, market-driven, nondiscriminatory, voluntary, accessible to operators irrespective of their size and economic contexts, based on sound scientific evidence and fully consistent with WTO rules, several delegations mentioned clear and objective criteria concerning fishing practices, together with quality of fish. Such principles should ensure and maintain credible schemes and avoid confusion on the part of consumers.

3) As regards the added value expected from eco-labelling schemes in the overall framework of the

Common Fisheries Policy, the following issues were raised:

- compatibility with international trade;
- clear links with sustainable fisheries;
- better consumer information and confidence;
- improved fisheries practices.

After a final report on the issue, the Commission may present a legislative proposal on the ecolabelling scheme accompanied by a full impact assessment.

Launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products

2005/2189(INI) - 29/06/2005 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : Communication to launch a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products.

CONTENT : The objective of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy adopted in 2002 is to ensure exploitation of living aquatic resources in a way that provides for sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions. Progress on the implementation of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy makes it necessary to address the question of the introduction of eco-labelling schemes as a means of integrating environmental protection concerns into the fisheries sector. Moreover, the recent emergence of an increasing number of "eco-labelled" products raises important questions with respect to competition, trade and consumer protection policies. This Communication intends to launch an in-depth conceptual debate about these topics and to explore the possibilities of moving ahead.

An eco-labelling scheme entitles a product to bear a distinctive logo, or statement, by way of which consumers are assured that the product has been produced according to a given set of environmental standards, such as the sustainability of the resource used as raw material, the environmental impact of the production method, or the recyclability of the product.

The Commission discusses current eco-labelling schemes in the fisheries sector, such as "Dolphin-safe/Dolphin-friendly" labelled tuna and the Marine Stewardship Council eco-labelling scheme.

It details the work on eco-labelling in international fora such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the WTO. It is of the view that a coherent Community policy on eco-labelling for fish and fisheries products should be developed to address the consequences of the emergence of disparate sets of eco-labels.

The main question for public authorities is how far voluntary eco-labelling schemes should be subject to rules in order to protect public interest. Three options seem to be available:

-No action;

-Creating a single Community eco-labelling scheme for fish and fishery products;

-Establishing minimum requirements for voluntary eco-labelling schemes.

The Commission examines the arguments for and against each option. It concludes that, all in all, the third option of establishing minimum requirements for voluntary eco-labelling schemes would be the most appropriate one at this juncture. This option would offer enough flexibility and would be proportionate in terms of costs. It would make it possible to take appropriate action for greater sustainability, while allowing a gradual approach. It would also offer adequate protection to consumers.

The Communication concludes that eco-labelling is a multi-faceted topic and that, therefore, a variety of questions will have to be considered as the intended debate follows its course.

The debate will have to touch upon key questions, like:

-What should an eco-labelling scheme certify: a fishery, a fishing method, anything other component? Should therefore single issue labels be considered as an integral part of an eco-labelling policy?

-How to ensure an approach that is devoid of contradictions whilst simultaneously offering a high degree of voluntarism and feasibility?

-How to fully use the potential of eco-labelling schemes for the promotion of sustainable fisheries, while yielding real benefits for fishermen, processors and consumers?

-Should the approach be more result oriented or means oriented?

Yet the overall objective remains to ensure a genuine Community approach to eco-labelling of fish and fisheries products reflecting best practice in this field. It is also the intention to reaffirm the Community's strong commitment to sustainability in the fields of the capture and use of fish. By means of such an approach, collaborative work with the fishing industry to encourage shared stewardship of the resource will also be a must.

The Commission invites the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee to debate the issues raised in this Communication. Consultation with the EEA members with the aim of ensuring a common approach will also be necessary, given their strong interest in this issue. Furthermore, the Commission also intends to consult with stakeholders, mainly through the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture and, in parallel, to carry out scientific and technical support work.