Basic information

2009/2107(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
New impetus for the strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture **Subject** 3.15.02 Aquaculture 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity 3.70.20 Sustainable development	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	MILANA Guido (S&D)	01/09/2009
	Shadow rapporteur GALLAGHER Pat the Cope (ALDE) STEVENSON Struan (ECR)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	LIOTARD Kartika Tamara (GUE/NGL)	18/11/2009

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	DAMANAKI Maria

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/04/2009	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2009)0162	Summary
22/10/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/05/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
10/05/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0150/2010	
17/06/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0243/2010	Summary

17/06/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/06/2010	Debate in Parliament		
17/06/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2009/2107(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/7/00515

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE439.290	25/02/2010	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE431.038	02/03/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE439.917	14/04/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0150/2010	10/05/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0243/2010	17/06/2010	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2009)0162	08/04/2009	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2010)6508	27/10/2010	

New impetus for the strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture

2009/2107(INI) - 08/04/2009 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to give a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture.

BACKGROUND: modern aquaculture represents a major innovation in the production of fish and aquatic food and has been the fastest growing food production sector with an average worldwide growth rate of 6-8% a year.

Aquaculture is an important economic activity in certain coastal and continental areas of the EU. The EU-27 aquaculture industry produced about 1.3 million tonnes of fish, shellfish and crustaceans in 2006, representing a turnover of around EUR 3 billion and generating approximately 65 000 jobs. Current EU consumption demand accounts for about 12 million tonnes.

The EU strategy for sustainable aquacultureadopted in 2002 has set out policy directions to promote the growth of aquaculture. Seven years on, significant progress has been made in ensuring the environmental sustainability, safety and quality of EU aquaculture production.

Against the background of fast-changing technologies and persisting economic and environmental challenges, it is time to take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of the EU aquaculture sector.

CONTENT: this Communication aims at increasing awareness among policy makers and public bodies, about the importance of aquaculture in the European Union. This Strategy also aims at providing EU leadership and guidance to both stakeholders and administrations to ensure consistency and clarity in designing the policies needed for the sustainable development of European aquaculture.

This Communication aims to identify and address the causes of this stagnation as well as examining the root causes of the stagnation in EU aquaculture production and looks at ways to improve the sector's competitiveness, sustainability and governance:

1) Promoting a sector (including equipment and technology providers):

- **through competitiveness and diversity**: this should be supported by the most advanced research and technology, covering the whole supply chain and meeting consumer demands in a sustainable manner. The EU has been a key contributor to research and technological development in aquaculture (EUR 98 million under the 6th Research Framework Programme, among which EUR 32 million for SMEs. It is essential to: (i) allocate a sufficient EU budget to aquaculture projects to further develop the knowledge-base for sustainable and competitive aquaculture practices; (ii) promote optimisation and development of key research infrastructures and reinforce networks and integration into broader scientific networks to address global challenges such as adaptation to climate change in the context of the new Maritime Policy and its strategic research agenda; (iii) invite Member States to recognise the importance of extensive and traditional forms of aquaculture and to consider possibilities of developing production in existing sites and facilities;
- **through a better development of space in coastal aquaculture, as well as freshwater fish-farming**: the Commission: (i) will continue its initiatives to promote the development of maritime spatial planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, as identified in the framework of the new EU Maritime Policy; (ii) invites all Member States to develop marine spatial planning systems, in which they fully recognise the strategic importance of aquaculture;
- **through the integration of specific needs in the EU's market policy for fisheries**: the EU aquaculture industry should be able to answer to consumer demands, be adaptable to changing market requirements and be capable of interacting on an equal footing with the other actors of the marketing chain. The Commission will review the market policy of fisheries and aquaculture products in 2009. The Commission will consider establishing a basis for promoting aquaculture development in third countries and to increase business opportunities for EU aquaculture firms, in the framework of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy.

2) Establishing conditions for sustainable growth of aquaculture: the Community shall ensure that the EU aquaculture industry develops in a way which is compatible with a high level of protection of the natural environment. On the same lines, aquatic food products that are manufactured in or imported to the EU shall comply with high protection standards of consumer health and safety. The Community should also pursue its objectives for a high level of protection of health and welfare in farmed aquatic animals. The Commission will continue to emphasise the importance of environmentally sustainable development of aquaculture in its policies and actions. It will ensure that Member States provide an appropriate level of protection of shellfish waters under the first river basin management plans established under the water framework directive. The Commission will ensure consumer health protection and recognise the health benefit of aquatic food. It will continue to address the need to ensure that aquatic food products are safe for the consumer, both such food produced in the Community and food imported from third countries. To guarantee a high level of consumer protection, competent authorities have to take preventive measures and impose requirements to ensure food quality and safety, as well as to establish surveillance and market prohibitions where necessary. Lastly, it will maintain the legislative tools in accordance with new knowledge on food safety in order to address the food safety risks in the most appropriate way.

3) Improving the sector's image and governance: Aquaculture's success will depend to a large extend on there being a business-friendly environment for the sector at national and/or local level. Better implementation of EU legislation by Members States should ensure a level-playing field among economic operators on decisions affecting the development of aquaculture.

Therefore, the Commission proposes to provide Member States and regional authorities with guidance to ensure that targeted measures at local, national and EU level help the sector make full use of its assets. It also proposes to reduce the administrative burden, ensure proper stakeholder participation and appropriate information to the public and adequate monitoring of the aquaculture sector.

New impetus for the strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture

2009/2107(INI) - 17/06/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 420 votes to 15, with 7 abstentions a resolution on the subject of a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture in response to a Commission communication on the same subject.

Members welcome the Commission's initiative as an indication of greater attention being given to the sustainable aquaculture sector. They hope that this will lead to a legislative review that will be better geared to the needs and the challenges facing the sector, with a view to consolidating this at global level.

Parliament expresses the view that a strong sustainable aquaculture sector could act as a catalyst for the development of many remote, coastal and rural areas in the Member States and contribute to the development of local production, with significant benefits also for consumers in the form of high-quality, healthy and sustainably produced food products. As a result, the EU should give greater strategic importance to a sustainable aquaculture sector and its development at Union level by according it the necessary financial assistance without ignoring the fact that advanced technologies, of which aquaculture is one, often require significant investment from businesses, whatever their size.

Parliament considers that a sustainable and organic aquaculture sector should be in a position to provide consumers with high-quality food products ensuring healthy and balanced nutrition. An amendment adopted in plenary also underlines that aquaculture systems which deplete wild fish stocks or pollute coastal waters are to be considered unsustainable and that European aquaculture should give priority to herbivorous species and carnivorous species which can thrive on reduced consumption of fishmeals and oils.

Members consider that any legislative reform of the aquaculture sector should fit in, in a smooth and complementary manner, with the current process of reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. They also point out that, with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament has ceased to be a consultative body in the fisheries sector and has become a co-legislator in the aquaculture sector as well.

Legislative, administrative and financial framework: Parliament calls on the Commission to bring forward swiftly a proposal for a regulation consolidating in a single text all the EU legislation governing the aquaculture sector and to promote coordination between the different Directorates-General that have responsibility in this field.

The Commission is invited to:

- set out in that regulation **specific European certification criteria** and general basic rules for the various product categories, with which every aquaculture establishment in the Community must comply, together with provisions for maximum harmonisation of environmental impact criteria at Community level in order to avoid any distortion of competition between Member States;
- equip the aquaculture sector with a **real economic crisis instrument** and to devise support systems to deal with biological natural disasters (like toxic algal blooms), man-made disasters;
- support the **experimental farming of native species**, technologies for the production of healthy fish and efforts to combat diseases occurring in aquaculture, in the interests of diversifying Community aquaculture production;
- take into account the trend towards the development of offshore aquaculture facilities as a potential solution to the problem of the availability of space on European coasts;
- guarantee **appropriate vocational training** in the field of aquaculture, boost the competitiveness of the sector and encourage the possible retraining of members of the professional fishing industry in alternative methods of managing aquatic environments;
- consider **creating specialist organisations for the promotion of aquaculture products**.

Member States are called upon to work towards a "**maritime development plan**" and the integrated management of coastal areas, as provided for under the EU's new maritime policy and in line with environmental impact assessments, which covers all the different product categories in the sector, such as shellfishing, sub-coastal aquaculture, offshore and freshwater aquaculture, and to undertake to **reduce existing bureaucratic obstacles** to obtaining the requisite permits and concessions to start a sustainable aquaculture activity.

Members hope that the **future European Fisheries Fund** in support of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy will provide for specific budget lines for sustainable aquaculture development and support for investment in that sector.

They stress too the need to ensure increased financial contributions for scientific research, innovation and technology transfers in the field of sustainable, organic, offshore and freshwater aquaculture.

Quality and consumer protection policy: Parliament takes the view that sustainable aquaculture development cannot take precedence over a stringent quality policy, environment-friendly production methods respectful of animal welfare rigorous health standards and a high level of consumer protection. They call on the Commission, therefore, to develop a specific **EU quality label for aquaculture products**, along with a specific organic aquaculture label, establishing strict rules in accordance with EU principles of high-quality organic production. The Commission is invited, among other things to:

- organise and promote, in close cooperation with the Member States, institutional **information campaigns** to promote aquaculture products, including organic aquaculture products;
- take the steps called for by Parliament with regard to the implementation of a staged **cormorant population management plan**, and to bring forward proposals for comprehensive legislation in this field;
- propose specific sustainable criteria in relation to the **well-being of farmed fish**;
- extend the scope of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the **protection of animals during transport** so as to limit the transport of fish over long distances, thus promoting locally based hatchery operations and encouraging slaughter close to the fish farm;
- ensure that the **sourcing of raw materials used for fish feed follows an environmentally acceptable practice** and does not have negative impacts on the ecosystems from which these ingredients are harvested;
- **pre-slaughter procedures** classed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as harmful to the wellbeing of the fish are avoided;
- issue specific technical guidelines on the **certification of sustainable fish feed**.

External relations: recalling that EU products face strong competition from products from third countries (especially Turkey, Chile, Vietnam and China), where companies can produce at much lower cost, Members call on the Commission and the Member States to strive to ensure that Community legislation is applied rigorously throughout the whole chain of aquaculture products, including feedstuffs and raw materials for feedstuffs, **imported from**

third countries. They stress the need to ensure that aquatic food products that are manufactured in or imported into the EU comply with high environmental protection and consumer health and safety standards. In this context, they reiterate the importance of conducting **systematic checks at places giving access to the internal market and key import hubs**.

The Commission is called to:

- strive to ensure that the **principle of mutual recognition** and free movement of goods is applied to curative and preventive pharmaceuticals used in aquaculture, to promote **reciprocal advanced know-how agreements** with third countries and to promote the introduction of best practices by other countries and international bodies;
- sponsor, as part of the EU's policy on cooperation with developing countries, **support and training measures** designed to help promote sustainable aquaculture and steer the awareness of aquaculturists in those countries towards a policy on quality and higher production standards;
- submit a report on **environmental and social standards** in the aquaculture industry outside the EU and to explore ways of improving the provision of information to consumers;
- launch **impact assessment studies** concerning the possible effects that Community trade agreements may have on the aquaculture sector.