Basic information

2013/2101(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Marine knowledge 2020: seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries **Subject** 3.15.01 Fish stocks, conservation of fishery resources 3.15.04 Management of fisheries, fisheries, fishing grounds 3.15.07 Fisheries inspectorate, surveillance of fishing vessels and areas 3.15.15 Fisheries agreements and cooperation 3.50.01.05 Research specific areas	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	PATRÃO NEVES Maria do Céu (PPE)	19/09/2012
	Shadow rapporteur ARSENIS Kriton (S&D) MEISSNER Gesine (ALDE) FERREIRA João (GUE/NGL)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	DAMANAKI Maria

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/08/2012	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2012)0473	Summary
10/06/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/09/2013	Vote in committee		
23/09/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0295/2013	Summary
22/10/2013	Debate in Parliament		
23/10/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0438/2013	Summary
23/10/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		

23/10/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2013/2101(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	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/7/12393

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE513.376	19/06/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE516.650	23/07/2013	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0295/2013	23/09/2013	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0438/2013	23/10/2013	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2012)0473	29/08/2012	Summary

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	RO_SENATE	COM(2012)0473	07/11/2012	
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2012)0473	13/12/2012	

Marine knowledge 2020: seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries

2013/2101(INI) - 29/08/2012 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to launch a debate on the best strategy to adopt to deliver an accessible, sustainable digital mapping of European sea-beds by 2020 and to provide timely information on the marine environment (Commission Green Paper).

BACKGROUND: in its September 2010 Communication entitled "Marine Knowledge 2020", the Commission highlighted the need to unlock the economic potential of Europe's wealth of marine observations. It showed this would provide the knowledge base to **facilitate the growth of a sustainable, job-creating 'blue economy' in marine and maritime sectors** by improving the competitiveness and efficiency of industry, public authorities and researchers.

The "Marine Knowledge 2020" initiative is based on the concept of a European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet), a network of marine organisations that would provide a single entry point for accessing and retrieving marine data. Since its adoption, progress has been made. Preparatory actions under the integrated maritime policy have delivered prototype thematic portals for EMODnet for selected sea-basins. A second phase of EMODnet has begun and should provide access to a digital map of all European waters by the end of 2014.

The Commission aims to work together with Member States to bring together available resources and mechanisms to deliver that knowledge for the benefit of industry, public authorities, researchers and society.

CONTENT: the Commission's flagship project involves the **preparation of a seamless multi-resolution digital seabed map of European waters by 2020**. This map should be:

- of the **highest resolution possible**, covering topography, geology, habitats and ecosystems;
- accompanied by **access to timely observations and information** on the present and past physical, chemical and biological state of the overlying water column, by associated data on human activities, by their impact on the sea and by oceanographic forecasts.

All this information should be **easily accessible, interoperable and free of restrictions on use**. It should be nourished by **a sustainable process that progressively improves its fitness for purpose** and helps Member States maximise the potential of their marine observation, sampling and surveying programmes.

While the Commission considers that the EU can provide support through the Common Strategic Framework for structural funding, including the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, **commitment from Member States and the private sector is needed** to achieve this goal.

There are a number of new challenges to be faced:

- major EU initiatives, especially EMODnet and GMES, have so far been implemented through limited-duration projects that will finish by 2014;
- the prolonged financial crisis has focused attention on public spending. There is an even greater need to ensure that some one and a half billion euro spent annually by EU Member States on Europe's marine monitoring network is cost-effective;
- easier access to fisheries data has not happened;
- the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami tragedy in Japan, followed by the nuclear accident at Fukushima, highlighted the benefits of bringing near-real time information on the state of the marine environment into the public domain;
- uncertainty as to the present and future impact of climate change on Europe's seas and coasts is stalling local and regional authorities' efforts to adapt.

There are also some new opportunities:

- a study has shown that private companies collect even more data than public authorities, but these have not been incorporated within EU initiatives so far;
- the digital terrain model of the European seabed will be delivered at a resolution of about 250 metres; four times better than what was previously publicly available on a pan-European scale;
- the 2014-2020 financial framework for the EU offers an opportunity to develop a more sustainable governance structure in which the collection, assembly and dissemination of marine data moves from being a set of projects defined by the Commission to a continuous, integrated process with priorities based on the needs of users in industry, public authorities and the research community;
- the rapid expansion of offshore wind power will require better access to marine data;
- the new Horizon 2020 research programme offers an opportunity to improve technologies for gathering and processing marine observations;
- Member States and Associated Countries have agreed to pool resources in a Joint Programming Initiative 'Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans' that can provide a framework for coordination of observation programmes.

This Green Paper takes stock of what has been done. It then opens a debate on the best strategy for moving forward to a new phase that meets the challenges defined in this document and profits from the opportunities to deliver an accessible, sustainable digital mapping of European sea-beds by 2020. It would also provide timely information on the present and past physical, chemical and biological state of the overlying water column and forecasts, together with a process that helps Member States maximise the potential of their marine observation, sampling and surveying programmes.

The consultation is open until 15 December 2012.

Marine knowledge 2020: seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries

2013/2101(INI) - 23/09/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Maria do Céu PATRÃO NEVES (EPP, PT) on marine knowledge 2020:"Seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries" as a follow-up to the Commission green Paper of 29 August 2012.

Members welcomed the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative which opened an exchange of ideas on this topic and undertook a public consultation to sound out opinions regarding the opportunities and challenges provided by access to information on marine monitoring in Europe.

They considered it necessary to **release, in line with the established rules, the potential of the huge amount of data on the marine environment** which has been collected and stored by numerous public and private bodies at European level, and to make it available and accessible to potential users.

The report is accordingly focused on the **importance and usefulness of pooling, mapping, and disseminating fisheries data** within the wider 'Marine Knowledge 2020' initiative, with particular reference to the following key points:

Information sources and types of data: the report highlighted the existence of a wide range of public and private bodies which store data on fishing activity in the EU, which should be integrated into the publicly available multiresolution digital seabed map:

- Member States collect and forward data that constitute an excellent source of information on fishing activity, and that this huge reserve of information is compiled by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and assessed by experts from the working groups of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF);
- some **producer organisations**, especially in the industrial fishing sector, store data on fishing activity which should complement the information currently available;
- the huge volume of data generated by fishing fleets equipped with vessel monitoring systems (VMS), would be of great use in mapping fishing activity.

The report emphasised the usefulness of making available charts of the spatial distribution of fishing fleets, fishing effort and catch composition and volume. Moreover, the separate mapping of data according to type of fishing activity, such as small-scale fishing, traditional fishing or industrial fishing, would provide a more realistic picture of the diversity of fisheries according to Members.

Promoting the obtainability and availability of data: Members recalled that data collection and fishery resource management are financed by the EU and the Member States and that the data collected must therefore be available for consultation by potential users and the general public. Access to fisheries data that are obtained using private financing and do not contain commercially sensitive information should be subject to authorisation by the organisations holding the data.

- When data are held by public authorities in Member States, the Commission should draw up a comprehensive set of standard guidelines for circulation, schedule collection, processing, and communication within a given time-frame, and should provide the encouragement needed for information to be made available for consultation by potential stakeholders.
- When fisheries data are obtained in research projects financed by the EU or Member States or subject to cofinancing, there should be a requirement to communicate the data according to a predetermined timetable once the projects have been completed.
- When data have been obtained from research projects the researchers concerned must be given reasonable time to publish their studies.

The report advocated the creation of mechanisms to provide easy access to relevant data on fishing, under conditions to be established and with different levels of access, and ensuring adequate levels of **confidentiality of information and commercial interests**. Independently, Members maintained that, irrespective of whether data are held by public or private bodies or have been obtained using public or private financing, the body responsible for collecting, processing, and communicating the information should invariably be mentioned.

Compilation and pooling data effectively: Members noted that if data are to be robust and reliable, their quality has to be standardised, verified, and checked, whether they come from Member States' databases or from fisheries research projects.

With a view to guaranteeing **comparability and interoperability** of fisheries data, the report:

- considered it imperative to establish **common protocols/models**, harmonised and tested in sampling strategies, and to lay down data collection and processing procedures and the format in which information is to be communicated - the DCF model could be used for that purpose;
- recommended that Member States designate a **national authority** to be responsible for data collection, compilation, processing, quality control, pooling, and transmission with a view to integration into a common fisheries information access platform.

Benefits from the processing and interpretation of data: Members pointed out that if the maximum benefit is to be derived from this initiative, the governance and operating model has to allow for the necessary collection, processing, interpretation, and communication of fisheries data and secure the participation and genuine involvement of Member States, the scientific world, and local communities.

They maintained, as regards governance and operation, that the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) should be given **permanent status**.

Marine knowledge 2020: seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries

2013/2101(INI) - 23/10/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on marine knowledge 2020:"Seabed mapping for promoting sustainable fisheries" as a follow-up to the Commission green Paper of 29 August 2012.

Members welcomed the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative which opened an exchange of ideas on this topic and undertook a public consultation to sound out opinions regarding the opportunities and challenges provided by access to information on marine monitoring in Europe.

Existing data on the marine environment is currently held by numerous different bodies in a dispersed and fragmented way. Parliament suggested that it was fundamental to **ensure availability of and ease of access to the vast reserve of data existing** on the marine environment in Europe and make it available and accessible to potential users in order to maximise resources and promote development, innovation and job creation in the marine and maritime sectors.

In its resolution, Parliament focused on the **importance and usefulness of pooling, mapping, and disseminating fisheries data** within the wider 'Marine Knowledge 2020' initiative, with particular reference to the following key points:

Information sources and types of data: the resolution highlighted the existence of a wide range of public and private bodies which store data on fishing activity in the EU, which should be integrated into the publicly available multiresolution digital seabed map. They concern in particular:

- Member States collect and forward data that constitute an excellent source of information on fishing activity, and that this huge reserve of information is compiled by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and assessed by experts from the working groups of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF);
- some **producer organisations**, especially in the industrial fishing sector, store data on fishing activity which should complement the information currently available;
- the huge volume of data generated by fishing fleets equipped with vessel monitoring systems (VMS), would be of great use in mapping fishing activity.

Members emphasised the usefulness of making available charts of the **spatial distribution of fishing fleets**, fishing effort and catch composition and volume. Moreover, the separate mapping of data according to **type of fishing activity**, such as small-scale fishing, traditional fishing or industrial fishing, would provide a more realistic picture of the diversity of fisheries according to Parliament.

Promoting the obtainability and availability of data: Members recalled that data collection and fishery resource management are financed by the EU and the Member States and that the data collected must therefore be available for consultation by potential users and the general public. Access to fisheries data that are obtained using private financing and do not contain commercially sensitive information should be subject to authorisation by the organisations holding the data.

When data are held by public authorities in Member States, the Commission should draw up a comprehensive set of standard guidelines for circulation, schedule collection, processing, and communication within a given time-frame, and should provide the encouragement needed for information to be made available for consultation by potential stakeholders.

The resolution advocated the creation of mechanisms to provide easy access to relevant data on fishing, under conditions to be established and with different levels of access, and ensuring adequate levels of **confidentiality of information and commercial interests,** especially information obtained from VMS reports, fishing logbooks, and logbooks kept by on-board observers.

Independently, Members maintained that, irrespective of whether data are held by public or private bodies or have been obtained using public or private financing, the body responsible for collecting, processing, and communicating the information should invariably be mentioned.

Compilation and pooling data effectively: Parliament noted that if data are to be robust and reliable, their quality has to be standardised, verified, and checked, whether they come from Member States' databases or from fisheries research projects.

With a view to guaranteeing **comparability and interoperability** of fisheries data, the resolution considered it imperative to establish **common protocols /models**, harmonised and tested in sampling strategies. It also recommended that Member States designate a **national authority** to be responsible for data collection, compilation, processing, quality control, pooling, and transmission with a view to integration into a common fisheries information access platform.

Benefits from the processing and interpretation of data: Members pointed out that if the maximum benefit is to be derived from this initiative, the **governance and operating model** has to allow for the necessary collection, processing, interpretation, and communication of fisheries data and secure the participation and genuine involvement of Member States, the scientific world, and local communities. They maintained, as regards governance and operation, that the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) should be given **permanent status**.