Basic information

2019/2162(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
More fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas **Subject** 3.15.01 Fish stocks, conservation of fishery resources	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	ROOSE Caroline (Greens /EFA)	08/01/2020
	Shadow rapporteur BELLAMY François-Xavier (EPP) CARVALHAIS Isabel (S&D) KARLESKIND Pierre (Renew) RUISSEN Bert-Jan (ECR) FERREIRA João (GUE/NGL)	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/12/2020	Vote in committee		
15/12/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0264/2020	Summary
18/01/2021	Debate in Parliament		
21/01/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0017/2021	Summary
21/01/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2019/2162(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/9/01971

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE650.373	10/07/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE657.286	11/09/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0264/2020	15/12/2020	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0017/2021	21/01/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)223	09/07/2021	

More fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas

2019/2162(INI) - 15/12/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Caroline ROOSE (Greens/EFA, BE) on more fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas.

By 2020, the marine environment was supposed to have achieved good environmental status and the exploitation of all fish stocks was supposed to be at a sustainable level. Although progress is being made, the targets set in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the CFP have not been met.

Improving fisheries management to end overfishing

Members reiterated their call for full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy with the aim of restoring and maintaining populations of fish stocks above biomass levels capable of producing MSY.

They called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- strengthen scientific coverage with the objective that 100 % of the fish stocks exploited in European waters be assessed at the latest by 2025 and that the MSY can be calculated for all these stocks, where scientifically possible;

- take the necessary steps in order to improve data collection on recreational fisheries, considering their environmental impact and socio-economic value.

For its part, the Commission should:

- support plans to improve selectivity and establish which practices are harmful to stocks, ocean biodiversity and marine environments and to introduce measures to limit and change them;

- support plans to improve selectivity and survival of non-target species, and to take into account the results of studies showing the detrimental impacts of fishing techniques such as bottom-contacting gear or fish aggregating devices (FADs) by strongly limiting their use;

- study the relevance of using indicators other than MSY in fisheries management that would take into account species interactions and socioeconomic factors as well as the effects of climate change and pollution;

- ensure that Member States adopt data collection programmes that cover the impact of fishing activities on the wider environment, including on the bycatch of sensitive species, and on the seabed.

Rebuild and restore

Overall, Members considered that the EU, following the evaluation of the CFP by 2022, should, where necessary, adapt current fisheries management practices and accelerate the transition towards low-impact fisheries, in order not only to preserve fish stocks at current levels but also, more importantly, to rebuild fish stocks and restore marine ecosystems.

The report underlined the importance of small-scale coastal fishing and believes that this sector can significantly facilitate transition to sustainable fish stock management.

Expanding the network of protected areas and improving its management

Although the EU has made progress and met the target of designating 10 % of Europe's waters as protected areas, the network of marine protected areas (MPAs) is far from being fully effective. When successful, marine protected areas offer large socio-economic benefits, especially for coastal communities and the fisheries and tourism sector, and that MPAs can perform key ecological functions for the reproduction of fish stocks (providing spawning grounds and nurseries) and improve their resilience.

Member States are urged to set strong and effective management plans for the existing and future MPAs and to put in place stronger control, monitoring and surveillance measures to ensure that MPAs are respected.

The importance of having a comprehensive and coherent approach when establishing MPAs, by not only limiting commercial fishing activities but also tackling other activities such as fossil fuel exploration and exploitation, mining, large-scale aquaculture, dredging, offshore wind farms, transport, and recreational fisheries and other leisure activities.

Member States are invited to expand the network of fish stock recovery areas under the CFP, especially where there is clear evidence of heavy concentrations of fish below minimum conservation reference size or of spawning grounds.

Tackling other environmental factors threatening fish stock recovery

In this regard, the report stressed that rapid and strong action to fight climate change is essential for the preservation of healthy marine organism populations and habitats, and therefore for the continuity of sustainable fishing activity and for food security in the long term.

Stressing the need to involve fishermen in the fight against pollution of the seas and oceans, Members called on the Commission to urge Member States to adopt legislation authorising fishermen to bring to land any waste caught at sea.

More fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas

2019/2162(INI) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 362 votes to 248, with 71 abstentions, a resolution on more fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is not yet fully implemented and some of its measures such as the establishment of fish stock recovery areas have not been used. According to STECF, some 38% of stocks in the North-East Atlantic and 92% of those under scientific assessment in the Mediterranean and Black Sea are overfished despite the legal requirement to stop overfishing by 2020.

Improving fisheries management to end overfishing

Parliament reiterated its call for full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy with the aim of restoring and maintaining populations of fish stocks above biomass levels capable of producing MSY. It called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- strengthen scientific coverage with the objective that 100 % of the fish stocks exploited in European waters be assessed at the latest by 2025 and that the MSY can be calculated for all these stocks, where scientifically possible;

- take the necessary steps in order to improve data collection on recreational fisheries, considering their environmental impact and socio-economic value.

For its part, the Commission should:

- present its proposals for Total Allowable Catches (TACs) as provided for in the CFP Regulation;

- strengthen the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, including by increasingly applying multi-species approaches, in order to minimise the negative impacts of fishing activities and other factors such as climate change on marine ecosystems, fish populations and society and to ensure ocean resilience to climate change;

- support plans to improve selectivity and establish which practices are harmful to stocks, ocean biodiversity and marine environments and to introduce measures to limit and change them;

- support plans to improve selectivity and survival of non-target species, and to take into account the results of studies showing the detrimental impacts of fishing techniques such as bottom-contacting gear or fish aggregating devices (FADs) by strongly limiting their use;

- study the relevance of using indicators other than MSY in fisheries management that would take into account species interactions and socioeconomic factors as well as the effects of climate change and pollution;

- ensure that Member States adopt data collection programmes that cover the impact of fishing activities on the wider environment, including on the bycatch of sensitive species, and on the seabed.

Transition to low-impact fishing

Overall, Members considered that the EU, following the evaluation of the CFP by 2022, should, where necessary, adapt current fisheries management practices and accelerate the transition towards low-impact fisheries, in order not only to preserve fish stocks at current levels but also, more importantly, to rebuild fish stocks and restore marine ecosystems.

The resolution underlined the importance of small-scale coastal fishing and believes that this sector can significantly facilitate transition to sustainable fish stock management. Artisanal fisheries should receive special attention and support.

Expanding the network of protected areas and improving its management

Although the EU has made progress and met the target of designating 10 % of Europe’s waters as protected areas, the network of marine protected areas (MPAs) is far from being fully effective, as only a very small share of the existing MPAs have management plans and protection measures.

Member States are urged to set strong and effective management plans for the existing and future MPAs and to put in place stronger control, monitoring and surveillance measures to ensure that MPAs are respected.

The Commission is urged to set strong science-based MPA management guidelines for Member States and to establish a classification of MPAs taking into account their stage of establishment, management plans and ecosystemic benefits. It should accompany fisheries agreements with third countries with management and governance measures such as protected marine areas.

The resolution insisted on the importance of having a comprehensive and coherent approach when establishing MPAs, by not only limiting commercial fishing activities but also tackling other activities such as fossil fuel exploration and exploitation, mining, large-scale aquaculture, dredging, offshore wind farms, transport, and recreational fisheries and other leisure activities.

Member States are invited to expand the network of fish stock recovery areas under the CFP, especially where there is clear evidence of heavy concentrations of fish below minimum conservation reference size or of spawning grounds.

Tackling other environmental factors threatening fish stock recovery

In this regard, the resolution stressed that rapid and strong action to fight climate change is essential for the preservation of healthy marine organism populations and habitats, and therefore for the continuity of sustainable fishing activity and for food security in the long term.

Stressing the need to involve fishermen in the fight against pollution of the seas and oceans, Members called on the Commission to urge Member States to adopt legislation authorising fishermen to bring to land any waste caught at sea.