



Directorate General Internal Policies of the Union

Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies

ISSUES WHERE PARLIAMENT MADE A DIFFERENCE IN STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

NOTE

Content:

This note provides information on issues where the European Parliament has played an important role in the current legislature, starting in 2004. It is structured following a committee-by-committee approach and covers the fields of transport, regional development, agriculture, fisheries, and culture and education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development Committee
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
BAS	Brake-assist systems
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CMO	Common market organisation
CoR	Committee of the Regions
CULT	Culture and Education Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Committee
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
EPP-ED	Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats
EUSF	European Union Solidarity Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPS	Frontal protection systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GM	Genetically modified
Greens/EFA	Greens/European Free Alliance
GUE/NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IFI	International Fund for Ireland
IND/DEM	Independence/Democracy Group

- IUU** Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
- MSY** Maximum sustainable yield
- PECH** Fisheries Committee
- PES** Socialist Group
- RBM** Rights-Based Management
- REGI** Regional Development Committee
- RFO** Regional Fisheries Organisation
- TAC** Total Allowable Catches
- TRAN** Transport and Tourism Committee
- UEN** Union for Europe of the Nations Group
- WTO** World Trade Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

The note aims to provide a broad introduction to issues to which the European Parliament has attached particular importance in recent years in the field of structural and cohesion policies. More specifically, it describes how Parliament, using the powers at its disposal, has set out to make a difference over these issues in the current legislature, starting from 2004 and ending at the time of writing (January 2009).

The note is divided into five parts, which correspond to the current areas of competence of five parliamentary committees (Transport and Tourism, Regional Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries and Culture and Education). These five broad areas are further subdivided into more specific topics in the text.

At the request of the committees, the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies produced several studies and notes on these topics.

For ease of use of the reader, each of the five broad areas is briefly introduced in the Executive Summary. These summaries are later developed in individual chapters.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1. Transport Policy

Transparency of Air Fares

Many consumers have on occasions been tempted by 'lure offers' of seemingly very cheap air tickets which turn out to be more expensive by the end of the booking process, once taxes and other charges are applied. Parliament has successfully pressed for the consumer to be better protected against such practices, by ensuring that the final price to be paid is indicated at all times, as laid down in recent EU provisions which entered into force in October 2008.

Road safety: Better protection for Pedestrians and Cyclists

A new regulation, agreed upon at first reading, aims at increased road safety through brake-assist systems and safety criteria for so-called 'bull bars'. Parliament, whose rapporteur was Francesco Ferrari (ALDE, IT), successfully pushed for the new requirements to be introduced more quickly than the Commission had initially proposed.

Road Safety: Blind-spot Mirrors to be Retrofitted to Older Lorries

The European Parliament achieved quicker retrofitting of old lorries with blind-spot mirrors to reduce the number of fatal injuries caused by blind spots, under Directive 2007/38/EC of 11 July 2007, for which the rapporteur was Paolo Costa (ALDE, IT).

Road Transport: Internalisation of Environmental Costs

In July 2008 the European Commission submitted a proposal to address the problem of the environmental costs of road transport, thanks to pressure from Parliament in the negotiations on the 'Eurovignette Directive' (Directive 2006/38/EC of 17 May 2006). The EP rapporteur was Corien Wortmann-Kool (EPP-ED, NL). This new proposal, together with the related model for the calculation of external costs, which the Commission was also obliged

to present, is widely considered as one of the most important EU transport dossiers to be dealt with in coming years.

European Parliament Designs Legal Framework for Public Transport

The EP substantially amended the Commission proposal¹ and safeguarded flexibility for the local and regional level with a view to the organisation of public transport. It placed a stronger emphasis on the subsidiarity principle and freedom of choice in favour of direct award and self-provision of transport services at local level by the competent authorities, thereby softening the compulsory tendering requirement. The final regulation was thus decisively influenced by the EP, whose rapporteur was Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL, NL).

Air Transport: Rights of Passengers with Reduced Mobility

Parliament insisted successfully during the legislative procedure that blind, visually impaired and deaf people, those with impaired hearing and people with learning difficulties should be included amongst those who must be given help at an airport under this legislation². The EP specified that air carriers and airport managing bodies must provide their personnel with training on providing direct assistance to people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. Furthermore, it decided that quality standards for assistance provided to people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility should be established in all airports with annual traffic exceeding 150 000 passenger movements per year. This is considerably more extensive than the Commission proposal, which only applied to airports handling more than 2 million passengers a year. The rapporteur for this proposal was Robert Evans (PES, UK).

EP pushed for an EU-wide Black List of Unsafe Airlines

The European Parliament successfully pushed through the approach of a single EU-wide 'black list' of unsafe airlines under Regulation 2111/2005 (of 14 December 2005). The Commission's proposal originally planned 25 different lists, one per Member State. Thanks to pressure from Parliament, whose rapporteur was Christine De Veyrac (EPP-ED, FR), this regulation also considerably strengthened passenger rights with regard to information and compensation.

Port package: Rejection for the Second Time

For a second time the European Parliament rejected a Commission proposal on market access to port services. A clear majority felt that the proposal was counterproductive and would create uncertainty for the future of ports in the EU. The proposal was criticised not only for its content but also for the fact that the Commission had presented a more or less identical proposal to the one rejected in 2003. Independently of the content, with this rejection Parliament also underlined its decisive role as co-legislator.

Railway Package: More Passenger Rights

The regulation on the rights and obligations of rail passengers was originally intended to apply only to passengers on international journeys³. The European Parliament, for which the rapporteur was Dirk Sterckx (ALDE, BE), successfully pressed for extending the scope

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of 23 October 2007.

² Regulation 1107/2006 of 5 July 2006.

³ Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 of 23 October 2007.

of the directive so that passengers on domestic journeys would also be entitled to compensation. Furthermore, the EP achieved improvements regarding the non-discriminatory access rules applicable to persons with reduced mobility which companies will be obliged to put in place.

More Competition to Revitalise the Railways

As with the first and second railway packages, under which full opening up of the freight transport market, including cabotage, took place from 1 January 2007, the European Parliament pressed in the third railway package for more competition between railways, focusing this time on passenger transport⁴. The rapporteur was Georg Jarzembowski (EPP-ED). During the legislative procedures for all of the three railway packages Parliament successfully pressed for rail transport markets to be opened up more quickly than originally envisaged by the Council.

Towards Harmonised Quality Standards for EU Tourist Services

In this non-legislative report Parliament made clear and concrete proposals for a consistent and holistic policy approach to tourism at EU level. In particular, these proposals deal with an EU-wide classification of tourist accommodation and an EU quality mark for tourism for the benefit of tourists travelling in Europe. The rapporteur was Paolo Costa (ALDE, IT).

2.2. Regional Policy

Regional Solidarity Support: EP Approves EUR 308 billion for Regional Development

In July 2006, the European Parliament gave its assent to the 2007-2013 package of Structural Funds, agreed after at times heated negotiations. The Structural Funds account for over one third of the EU budget for the period. Funding is available in all 27 Member States. The EP has the power to accept or reject the Structural Funds general regulations, and was successful in securing changes regarding the environment and sustainable development, improved accessibility for people with disabilities, and strengthened consultation arrangements at local level, ensuring the widest possible input into the regional development debate.

EU Funding for Better Housing

Decent and affordable housing for EU citizens has been given a boost by the European Regional Development Fund, which allows new Member States to apply for EU support for certain housing renovation projects. This aid is destined to help people save energy in their homes, reducing energy bills while also safeguarding the environment. In May 2007, the European Parliament voted strongly in favour of proposals to extend this availability to older Member States from 2009. The EP based its vote on the pressing need for EU citizens in all Member States to have access to adequate housing in urban areas, many of which are currently threatened by physical deterioration and the effects of social exclusion.

⁴ As regards Directive 2007/58/EC of 23 October 2007.

EU Solidarity: Money Available to Combat Terrorist Acts and Public Health Threats

The Solidarity Fund can provide up to EUR 1 billion a year to a Member State to help it respond to major emergencies. During this Parliament, resolutions have been adopted to increase the scope and flexibility of the Fund, with regard in particular to the consequences of terrorism, major public health crises and industrial disasters, as well as to the impact of forest fires, floods and earthquakes. The intention is not to allow those responsible for man-made disasters to walk away from their responsibilities ('the polluter pays'), but to permit rapid humanitarian responses to be made.

Supporting the Northern Irish Peace Process

The current EP has consistently supported Northern Ireland in the process of achieving peace and reconciliation. In 2008, the Parliament voted for a report drafted by Northern Irish MEP Bairbre de Brún (GUE/NGL, UK) which endorsed the positive results and best practice achieved by the PEACE programmes to date. MEPs are now considering how the work of PEACE could help other regions living in conflict, whether in the EU or outside. The EP also endorsed, in 2006, the continuation of the EUR 15 million per year in European support to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) until the fund is wound up in 2010.

Volunteering Empowers the EU Citizen

The EP recently adopted a report concluding that volunteering is good for the citizen, for the community, for regional economic development and for the national economy. Research found that over 100 million EU citizens undertake voluntary work. Not only do volunteers help to implement EU-funded programmes such as INTERREG and the Northern Ireland PEACE Programme, but the contribution of volunteering to gross domestic product in some States is estimated to be significant. Efforts by the EU to promote Europe's 'social capital' would help the EU to establish direct links between the EU and its citizens and communities. The report calls on the Commission and Member States to consider the introduction of VAT exemptions for charities.

MEPs Challenge Unjustified Company Relocations

Members of the EP adopted a report in March 2006 calling on the European Commission to impose penalties on companies engaging in unjustified relocations. The companies in question are those which, having received EU support for their business, awarded as part of an overall package of regional aid, then relocate within 7 years of receiving that aid. A key objection by the EP to this practice is the threat of job losses in regions already badly affected by economic decline - precisely the type of region that EU rules should be seeking to help. MEPs backed a call for the Commission to require repayment of regional state aid awarded to any company that subsequently takes an early decision to relocate.

Supporting EU Companies in Island Regions with Fuel and Energy Costs

Early in 2007, the EP adopted an own-initiative report asking the European Commission to explore whether State aid can be given to the island regions of the EU, where fuel and energy costs can adversely affect the competitiveness of local industries. In identifying the burden imposed upon island regions by the fluctuating cost of fuel, the EP highlighted the knock-on impact of fuel prices on the cost of transporting materials between the islands and the mainland of the EU. The establishment of a specific EU Islands administrative unit within DG REGIO was also recommended.

Reducing Regional Development Disparities

A report approved by the European Parliament in the summer of 2007 called for resolute action to reduce the most acute development shortcomings in the poorest regions of the EU. As well as promoting judicious investment in information technology infrastructure and education in its use, the European Parliament holds that building up the capacity of the administrators in new Member States to 'absorb' EU support is a key element in this battle. Public-Private Partnerships are advocated by the European Parliament as a way to involve private capital in projects.

Regional Development Committee Scrutinises EU Regional Spending

In January 2008, REGI took evidence from Danuta Huber, the European Regional Policy Commissioner. Regional Development MEPs wished to question the Commissioner about the feared 'loss' of Structural Funds money from the EU budget, following expressions of dissatisfaction from MEPs on the Budgetary Control Committee about the management of Structural Funds in some countries and regions. This followed a Court of Auditors statement accusing the Commission of incorrect reimbursement of funding. Ten Member States were said by the Commissioner to be at risk of errors or irregularities in spending and the Commissioner assured REGI MEPs that her officials were monitoring action plans by each of the Member States in question.

Building the EU's Capacity to Innovate

The development of the EU's innovative capacity was the subject of an own-initiative report adopted by the European Parliament in May 2007. Among the recommendations in the report were the principles of low-cost, or free, access to broadband and support for cross-border cooperation among regional academic and business stakeholders. Another means of promoting improved cross-sectoral collaboration would be support for the development of 'clusters' of research and business units. The Commission and Member States were called on to provide equal access for all the EU's citizens to education at every level. Greater access to information-based working was supported, and the creation of appropriate financial and risk-management mechanisms encouraged, possibly for use alongside the existing European Investment Bank/European Investment Fund instruments, such as JASPERS, JEREMIE and JESSICA.

2.3. Agriculture

A New CAP in Progress: The Health Check

Parliament considers the scrapping of all forms of regulation of agricultural markets to be politically undesirable since, as the current situation shows, European and global reserves stand at dramatically low levels. This is having negative repercussions on consumer purchasing power and farmers' incomes, while at the same time encouraging speculation. In view of the anticipated increase in environmental dangers and considerable price fluctuations, Parliament considers additional risk prevention to be of vital importance. Members also consider that direct payments will remain necessary in the future as a basic income guarantee, not only in the event of market failure but also for the provision of public goods by farmers and as compensation for the EU's high environmental, food safety, animal welfare and social standards.

What Future for Young Farmers?

In future the CAP must seek to remove the barriers currently facing young people wishing to set up in farming by making generational change one of its priorities. The EP draws attention to the continuing difficulties stemming from high setup costs (including property sale and rental prices) and the need to invest continuously in tangible capital and human potential in order to make technological and logistical improvements.

CAP and Global Food Security

For thirty years food prices have fallen in real terms both in Europe and globally. This trend has been reversed in recent months by sudden and steep upward movements in world agricultural commodity prices. These movements are the result of a complex combination of structural and more temporary factors. At EU level, policy initiatives must pursue three complementary lines of intervention: actions to address and mitigate short- and medium-term effects of the food price 'shock'; actions to contribute to the global effort to tackle the effects of the price rises on poor populations; and, last but not least, actions to increase agricultural supply and ensure food security in the longer term. The CAP could make explicit adjustments to respond directly to the exceptionally high price levels.

Risk and Crisis Management in Agriculture

Parliament believes that the priority of risk management in agriculture should be to serve the general interest, guaranteeing the supply of healthy foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials to the population and safeguarding the environment against damage. It felt that the three risk and crisis management options being considered by the Commission (insurances, mutual funds and basic income guarantees) were not, in fact, preventive measures for reducing risks, but financing models for providing compensation in the event of damage.

Natural Disasters, Fires, Floods and Droughts

Parliament believes that rural development policy could play a useful role in the prevention of natural disasters. It stresses that the drastic reduction in resources for rural development have hindered the drafting of action plans to prevent damage caused by natural disasters. It recommends, however, that national and regional rural development plans give priority to measures aimed at the causes of the disasters (*inter alia*, the fight against erosion, the repopulation of woodland with appropriate species, the preservation of firebreaks, hydraulic projects, the maintenance of woodland, and water-saving agro-environmental action). Moving on, Parliament urges the Commission to provide support for measures aimed at reducing the combustibility of forests, such as encouraging the profitability of forests and their sustainable management and using residual forest biomass as renewable energy.

Situation and Prospects of Agriculture in Mountainous Regions

Some 19% of the EU's population lives and works in mountainous areas. Mountains can be seen as a multifunctional habitat. As such, mountain areas are characterised by a host of natural characteristics: steep slopes, weather conditions, erosion, height differences, high altitude, etc. At present there are as many different legal frameworks for Europe's mountain areas as there are Member States. What is required is a sensible framework that combines regulations and assistance in the best possible way to assist Europe's mountain regions in their efforts to achieve sustainable and forward-looking competitiveness.

New Animal Health Strategy for the European Union

Parliament draws attention to the fact that the common animal health policy is one of the most integrated EU policies and that most of its funding should be covered by the Community budget, which should not preclude the financial responsibility of the Member States and farmers. Members criticised the Commission for making no reference to the funding required for its policy.

The Protection and Welfare of Animals

The EP supports stricter animal welfare rules in the EU; accordingly it has called on the Commission to submit plans for animal protection labelling and for the strengthening of animal protection in the World Trade Organization (WTO). MEPs also support a ban on seal and 'cruelty product' imports into the EU.

Promotion of Crops for Non-Food Purposes

The EP has called on the Commission to define a strategy and action plan to promote renewable energy sources in order to contribute to guaranteeing the security of food supply and improving energy efficiency in the EU. Parliament calls on the Commission to encourage the production of speciality chemicals from agricultural raw materials in order to increase farm income and provide the market with environmentally friendly and healthy products in the place of non-biodegradable chemical products. Parliament also highlights the potential offered by agricultural residues and waste for the production of heating, cooling and electricity, employing methods that are economically efficient and ecologically sound.

Biotechnology: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture in Europe

The EP called for more action by the Commission and the Council, but it sounded a cautious note with regard to genetically modified (GM) crops and wanted to see a clearer legal framework in this area. As far as the legislative framework was concerned, EP expressed support for the current precautionary approach to the approval of new biotechnology products.

2.4. Fisheries

Crisis in the Fisheries Industry

Since the beginning of the 6th legislature, the European Parliament has dealt with the economic crisis in fisheries with four reports ('reforming the system of financial aid to fishermen', 'inshore fishing', 'improving the economic situation in the fishing industry' and 'implementation of the common market organisation') and one resolution on the 'crisis of the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel prices'.

Management Measures for the Sustainable Exploitation of Fishery Resources in the Mediterranean Sea

At the end of the 5th legislature, Parliament had blocked this key regulation. A compromise between Parliament and the Commission sought to restore a satisfactory situation to the resource as soon as possible. The majority of Parliament's adopted amendments referred to tuna fishing and the minimum capture sizes linked with the authorised fishing gears and their characteristics.

Stock Recovery and Management Plans

The stock management/reconstitution plans are the most important element of the resources conservation policy. Parliament adopted several reports on this issue.

Implementing Sustainability in EU Fisheries through Maximum Sustainable Yield

The European Parliament warned that, for a large majority of scientists, the traditional maximum sustainable yield (MSY) model had been superseded by new cutting-edge approaches that considered the ecosystem in its entirety, and cautioned as to the difficulties in applying the MSY model to multispecies fisheries. It deplored the lack of any analysis of the evolution of, and different approaches to, the MSY concept, as well as the inadequate solutions offered by the Commission's Communication, as well as the absence of an in-depth evaluation of the impact of applying the MSY model. The EP called on the Commission to devise a system of access to resources that placed the accent on sustainability, discouraging discards, simplifying the technical measures, eliminating discrimination and excessive competition for stocks, introducing flexibility, and boosting the industry's competitiveness. The EP also stressed that any change in the management system must necessarily include compensation mechanisms, based on an assessment of the social and economic impact of the proposal.

A Policy to Reduce Unwanted By-Catches and Eliminate Discards in European Fisheries

The EP pointed out that the total allowable catches (TAC) system is one of the major causes of discards and that measures must be adopted to prevent compulsory discards of unavoidably caught species of legal size owing to the lack of a quota for those species. By-catch quotas should be incorporated into TACs and all landed by-catch should be counted against quota allocations. Should a fishery exceed its by-catch quota it would risk closure, just as the triggering of real-time closures by an excess of juveniles is suggested. This quota should then be gradually reduced to provide further incentives to improve gear selectivity.

Rights-Based Management Tools in Fisheries

The European Parliament called on the Commission to study the rights-based management (RBM) systems currently in operation within the Member States, thereby assessing the effectiveness of the existing systems of management in achieving the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Establishing a Community System to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

The European Parliament stressed the need to create a list of vessels involved in IUU fishing, a scheme of port state control prohibiting access by third-country IUU vessels, a ban on the importation of IUU fish by requiring certification by the flag State that the fish is legal, the development of a Community Alert System to be activated when IUU fish has been detected and prohibition of importing fish from countries that have been identified as not cooperating with the EU scheme.

Launching a Debate on a Community Approach to Eco-labelling Schemes for Fisheries Products

The European Parliament called on the Commission to draw up a communication detailing the minimum requirements and guidelines for a Community eco-labelling scheme for fisheries products. It stressed that the Commission should promote an eco-labelling

scheme, establishing rules of operation and guaranteeing the independence of the accreditation and certification bodies, as well as the credibility of the claims made by the label.

Protection of Marine Ecosystems in the High Seas from the Adverse Impact of Bottom-Fishing Gears

The European Parliament stressed the need to take into account international guidelines on the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and stated that special fishing permits must be accompanied by a detailed fishing plan.

Submission by Member States of Statistics on Aquaculture

Under the codecision procedure, the European Parliament pointed out the need for detailed data for suitable monitoring and management of hatcheries and nurseries, taking into account their increasing importance for aquaculture activity. The amendments aimed to improve clarity and coherence, and to make provision for information and regular updates for the Parliament and the Council concerning the application of the Regulation.

2.5. Culture

Jobs and Growth Potential of the Cultural Sector

The European Parliament attaches great importance to cross-border mobility. In a 2006 report on the social security status of artists, Parliament stressed the need for a regulatory framework for mobile artists to cope with tax and social security problems. The Council subsequently agreed on a work plan for culture, including the objective of improving the regulatory conditions for mobile artists.

Making Europe's Common Heritage Known to People

The European Parliament intends to foster knowledge of our common European heritage. The protection of this heritage is one of its concerns. Its report on the European agenda for culture calls on the Commission to propose specific programmes to preserve Europe's cultural heritage. The protection of Europe's heritage was also the focus of a 2005 report on the collection and preservation of cinematographic heritage and a 2006 report on European cultural and architectural heritage at local level. The common European heritage is also at the heart of a very successful initiative, the European Capital of Culture.

Intercultural Dialogue

Increasingly diverse societies and the process of globalisation bring people from different cultural backgrounds and views closer together. Peaceful coexistence is based on mutual understanding and respect for diverse perspectives. This can be fostered by an open and respectful exchange. Such an exchange is one of the main aims of intercultural dialogue.

The European Parliament has made support for intercultural dialogue one of its priorities. It has been incorporated into Parliament's external relations policy. Furthermore, in the context of the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue 2008, Parliament organised and hosted a series of events, including, high-level meetings with religious leaders, debates and conferences, an Arab Week, an African Week and an intercultural film festival.

Fostering Mobility by Increasing Erasmus Grants

One of the most successful EU programmes is Erasmus, the student exchange programme. In 2002 it reached the 'millionth Erasmus student' goal. By now over 1.5 million students have participated in the student exchange programme. 31 countries are currently participating in the programme, and nine out of every ten EU higher-education establishments are now involved. In 2006 MEPs succeeded in increasing the monthly Erasmus grant through negotiations with the Council. From 1 January 2007 the grant rose to €200 per month, an increase of €50 per month over the previous programme.

Education and Competitiveness

Parliament regards education as the best way of ensuring the EU's competitiveness. With a view to attaining the Lisbon objective of making Europe a competitive, knowledge-based economy, Parliament, in a 2005 resolution on education as the cornerstone of the Lisbon process, called on the Member States to increase investment in education, to frame more consistent national education policies, to promote scientific and technical studies and to develop an integrated strategy for lifelong learning which would support social inclusion.

Reform of European Television Rules

It was the European Parliament which first identified the need to modernise the existing regulation on the European audiovisual sector because of new technological developments. The new directive on Audiovisual Media Services now also includes non-linear services. Throughout the negotiation process, Parliament played a major role in increasing, or at least maintaining, qualitative and quantitative restrictions on advertising (e.g. the upper limit for commercials continues to be 12 minutes an hour) and product placement, promoting full access for people with disabilities and effectively improving protection of minors through the development of codes of conduct (e.g. regarding advertising for 'unhealthy' food during children's programmes).

Safeguarding the Diversity of European Media

The European Parliament believes that a pluralistic media system is essential for a democratic Europe. In a resolution on media pluralism, adopted in September 2008, Members urged the Commission and the Member States to safeguard media pluralism, to ensure that all EU citizens could access free and diversified media in all Member States and to recommend improvements when needed.

In the same spirit, in a report also adopted in September 2008, Parliament called for greater recognition of 'community media', that is to say media outlets mainly run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis. These are normally managed by local communities and could also play a role in making the EU's work better known.

Fostering European Cinema

In order to foster distribution of European films, in 2007 the European Parliament set up a film prize called LUX. The annual award rewards a film that addresses current social issues or that highlights European culture. The prize consists in provision of 23 subtitled copies of the prize-winning film in all Community languages and a version for people with impaired hearing. The first winner was German-Turkish director Fatih Akin with his movie 'The Edge of Heaven' (*Auf der anderen Seite*).

In 2006, the European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the 'MEDIA 2007' programme, which facilitates filmmakers' access to financing and helps to increase the circulation of European audiovisual works all over the world. The success of this

programme was evident at this year's Cannes Film Festival, where four MEDIA-funded films received awards.

The European Parliament Fosters and Embodies Multilingualism

The European Parliament's commitment to Multilingualism is unique: the institution works in all the official languages of the European Union. Every EU citizen has the right to present requests or petitions in an official language to the European Parliament, and to receive a reply in that language. In addition, each Member of the European Parliament has the right to speak in and to hear his or her official language. With the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the number of official languages of the EU institutions more than doubled to 23. This posed an enormous challenge in terms of the management and organisation of the interpretation and translation services.

The European Parliament Supports Active Young People

In April 2008, the organisers of the Charlemagne Prize and the European Parliament jointly created a new European Charlemagne Youth Prize, which recognises contributions by young people towards the process of European integration. The prize provides funding of €2 000 - €5 000 for existing projects that foster a shared sense of European identity and cooperation. The first Charlemagne Youth Prize was awarded to a Hungarian youth project called 'Students without Boundaries' on the evening of 29 April in Aachen: every year more than one hundred students from Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and other countries gather for leadership workshops on European issues. The second and third prizes went to the United Kingdom and Greece respectively.

MEPs Concerned About TV Rights, Player Training, Doping and Racism

Stricter rules on doping, no quotas for football players from specific countries and a fair distribution of lottery profits were among the European Parliament's proposals in a report on the Commission White Paper on sport, adopted by a large majority in May 2008. The report called on the Commission to come up with clearer guidelines on how to apply EU rules in the area of sport. Parliament also voiced concern about the possible deregulation of gambling markets. In a report on professional football adopted in 2007 MEPs had already stated that professional football in the EU needed better governing rules in many areas, from managing clubs' finances to recruiting young talent, and had called on the European Commission to propose solutions.

Communicating Europe to its Citizens and Fostering Active Citizenship

As the representative of the interests of Europe's citizens, the European Parliament attaches great importance to communicating the European Union's activities to its citizens. In its reports, Parliament has repeatedly made detailed proposals for improving the relationship between the EU and its citizens. The EP advocates developing a common communication strategy for all the EU institutions, reviewing communication methods, communicating European issues at a decentralised level, and calls for stronger involvement and cross-border cooperation on the part of national, regional and local media.

3. TRANSPORT POLICY

3.1. More Transparency on Air Fares

During the legislative procedure Parliament successfully pressed for better consumer protection as regards transparent air fares. In particular, booking via the Internet - often the only possibility with low-cost air carriers - will be more transparent in future. Air fares as displayed will have to include all taxes, fees and charges added to the basic ticket price and known at the time of publication. The final price to be paid must always be indicated. This means that customers will know the true price at the beginning of the booking process.

In addition to an indication of the final price, the air fare or air rate, taxes, airport charges, other charges, surcharges and fees, such as those related to security or fuel, must be specified as a minimum.

Regarding security charges, MEPs successfully argued that the consumer has a right to know how high these costs are, and what they are used for. Where airport or on-board security costs are included in the price of an air ticket, these costs will have to be shown separately on the ticket or otherwise indicated to the passenger.

Further optional price supplements must be communicated in a clear, transparent and unambiguous way at the start of any booking process and their acceptance by the customer must be on an 'opt-in' basis.

With these new provisions, which entered into force on 31 October 2008, Parliament tackled the common and misleading practice of 'lure-offers'. Several airlines have been advertising tickets at seemingly very cheap prices when in fact the final price turns out to be much higher at the end of the booking process.

Reference: Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community⁵

Rapporteur: Arūnas Degutis (ALDE, LT)

3.2. Road safety: Better Protection for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Each year 8 000 pedestrians and cyclists are killed and 300 000 injured across the EU. A new EU regulation seeks to reduce these figures by laying down stricter safety requirements to be respected by manufacturers of cars and light goods vehicles. The regulation replaces and merges Directives 2003/102/EC and 2005/66/EC on frontal protection systems.

The new safety standards revolve around a number of performance tests that vehicles and frontal protection systems have to pass. They also relate to the compulsory introduction of brake assistance systems. Differentiated timetables for the introduction of these standards will apply to 'new vehicles' (new cars made under an existing design) and 'new vehicle types' (cars made under new, not yet existing, designs).

⁵ T6-0337/2007, 11/07/2007, T6-0342/2008, 09/07/2008, Official Journal: L 293 31.10.2008, p. 0003, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5372632.

During the negotiations with the Council, a large number of the EP's amendments to the Commission proposal were accepted. In particular, MEPs successfully pushed for the new requirements to be introduced more quickly than the Commission had proposed.

The main points of the first reading agreement are listed below:

Compulsory brake-assist systems (BAS) and the performance tests that cars have to pass in order to increase pedestrian protection (passive safety measures) will be introduced between 9 and 15 months earlier than the Commission initially proposed. Furthermore, the European Parliament successfully pressed for the abolition of a time distinction between lighter and heavier cars for the introduction of BAS.

The safety requirements for frontal protection systems (FPS; so called 'bull bars'), should be at the same level as the safety requirements for vehicles without FPS installed. No additional negative impact on the pedestrian should result from FPS.

Not only should developments on active safety technologies be monitored, but also the possibility for increased passive safety requirements (car design) should be analysed. The Commission, acting on the basis of relevant information communicated by the approval authorities and interested parties as well as on the basis of independent studies, is to monitor the technical developments of enhanced passive safety requirements, brake-assist and other active safety technologies which may provide improved protection to vulnerable road users. Five years after entry into force of the regulation, the Commission is to review the feasibility and use of any such enhanced passive safety requirements.

Reference: First reading agreement - Publication in Official Journal pending (2008)⁶

Rapporteur: Francesco Ferrari (ALDE, IT)

3.3. Road Safety: Blind-spot Mirrors to be Retrofitted to Older Lorries

It is estimated that every year around 400 people in Europe are killed in accidents that are caused by drivers of heavy goods vehicles who are not aware that other road users are very close to their vehicle – often related to a change of direction at crossings, junctions or roundabouts – owing to the 'blind spot'. Many of those victims are vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians.

As from 2007 all new heavy goods vehicles of more than 3.5 tons circulating on EU roads have to comply with stringent provisions requiring them to be equipped with blind-spot mirrors (see Directive 2003/97/EC). This measure does not, however, address the risk that existing heavy goods vehicles pose. There are an estimated 5 million heavy goods vehicles currently in circulation to which Directive 2003/97/EC does not apply (including those from Bulgaria and Romania would make this figure even higher).

The purpose of this Directive is to lay down requirements for fitting vehicles of categories N2 and N3 with systems of indirect vision (such as wide-angle and close-proximity mirrors, cameras, monitors, or other type-approved systems of indirect vision) to improve the driver's field of vision and to increase vehicle safety.

⁶ T6-0297/2008, 18/06/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5540042.

During the negotiations with the Council, Parliament successfully pressed for shortening the implementation deadline by which Member States had to require that all relevant heavy lorries be equipped, on the passenger side, with wide-angle and close-proximity mirrors (31 March 2009 at the latest). Retrofitting blind-spot mirrors to heavy lorries in operation since 2000 would cost between EUR 100 and 150 per lorry.

Reference: Directive 2007/38/EC of 11 July 2007⁷

Rapporteur: Paolo Costa (ALDE, IT)

3.4. Road Transport: Internalisation of Environmental Costs

Directive 99/62/EC of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures laid down provisions on tolls and charges for the use of motorways and multi-lane roads, bridges, tunnels and mountain passes, with minimum and maximum rates. This directive was amended by Directive 2006/38/EC of 17 May 2006 (**both** known as the '**Infrastructure Charging Directive**' or '**Eurovignette Directive**'). Apart from harmonisation of rates in all Member States and uniform methods for calculating infrastructure costs, the new directive provides for greater differentiation between charges, taking account of environmental aspects or congestion, and consequently provides the Member States with an instrument for traffic management. In certain regions additional toll charges may be levied in order to tackle the problem of environmental damage, including poor air quality, or to invest in more environmentally friendly modes of transport such as railways.

During the legislative procedure on the Infrastructure Charging Directive in 2005, Parliament successfully pressed for the scope of the directive to be extended to include all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes as from 2012, and for the environmental aspects of the directive to be strengthened. In negotiations with the Council of Ministers, Parliament was able, in particular, to argue successfully that the new directive should include a roadmap for the internalisation of external costs for all modes of transport. Thanks to the European Parliament, the following wording was adopted: 'No later than 10 June 2008, the Commission shall present, after examining all options including environment, noise, congestion and health-related costs, a generally applicable, transparent and comprehensible model for the assessment of all external costs to serve as the basis for future calculations of infrastructure charges. This model shall be accompanied by an impact analysis of the internalisation of external costs for all modes of transport and a strategy for a stepwise implementation of the model for all modes of transport'.

This model and its related proposal - 'The Greening of Transport Package' - which the Commission finally presented in July 2008 - are widely considered as one of the most important EU transport dossiers to be dealt with in the coming years. In this context, the committee asked the Policy Department to carry out a study on *Pricing systems for Road Freight Transport in EU Member States and Switzerland*⁸.

⁷ T6-0177/2007, 10/05/2007, Official Journal: L 184 14.07.2007, p. 25.

OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5394642.

⁸ TRT - Trasporti e Territorio, Milan, *Pricing Systems for Road Freight Transport in EU Member States and Switzerland*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2008.

Reference: Directive 2006/38/EC of 17 May 2006 ('Eurovignette Directive')⁹

Rapporteur: Corien Wortmann-Kool (EPP-ED, NL)

3.5. European Parliament Designs Legal Framework for Public Transport

Urban, suburban and regional rail and road transport services frequently entail public service obligations in the Member States and are often provided by public companies. The main legislation governing this area was Regulation 1191/69 of 26 June 1969 (as amended by Regulation 1893/91 of 20 June 1991). A Commission proposal of 26 July 2000 proposed the recasting of this regulation. This was aimed at developing competition in public passenger transport services, in particular public local and regional transport services, with the help of compulsory public tendering. In November 2001 the European Parliament substantially amended the Commission proposal concerning such services by placing stronger emphasis on the subsidiarity principle and freedom of choice in favour of direct award and the self-provision of transport services locally by the competent authorities and softening the compulsory tendering requirement. The Commission subsequently submitted a new proposal (COM 2005/319) in July 2005. In May 2007 the Council and the European Parliament finally agreed on the restructuring of the legal framework for public passenger transport in the form of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007. In this agreement Parliament succeeded in carrying through substantial parts of its original position.

In addition to the tendering of transport services, this regulation permits, in certain circumstances, the direct awarding of services to small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as to so-called 'in-house businesses'. Hence, cities and regions may decide to provide public passenger transport services for themselves. The principle of subsidiarity was clearly emphasised throughout. In addition, the new regulation covers further elements, including:

- a) a ban on service providers from protected markets operating in other markets,
- b) provision for the establishment of social standards and quality criteria,
- c) provisions designed to limit the duration of public service contracts.

Reference: Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of 23 October 2007¹⁰

Rapporteur: Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL, NL)

3.6. Air Transport: Rights of Passengers with Reduced Mobility

This regulation aims at strengthening the rights of people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air. The regulation establishes rules to protect people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility against discrimination and to ensure that they receive appropriate assistance. Under the regulation a reservation or boarding can only be refused for justified safety reasons or if, owing to the size of the aircraft or its doors, the embarkation or carriage of a person with a disability or reduced mobility is physically impossible. In the event of refusal to accept a reservation, the person concerned will be offered an acceptable alternative. In the event of embarkation being refused, the person will be offered the right to reimbursement or re-routing.

⁹ T5-0305/2004, 20/04/2004, T6-0516/2005, 15/12/2005, Official Journal: L 157 09.06.2006, p. 0008-0023, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=235282.

¹⁰ T5-0597/2001, 14/11/2001, T6-0174/2007, 10/05/2007, Official Journal: L 315 03.12.2007, p. 0001, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=157312.

The regulation also includes the following elements:

- the creation of designated points which people with reduced mobility can approach to request assistance in all airports with over 150 000 passengers/year. The airport operators are responsible for the provision of these services free of charge. Those affected cannot be charged any additional costs. The request for assistance (for example to and from the aircraft) must be made known by the persons concerned at least 48 hours before departure;
- all airlines (according to their passenger share) are to contribute to the financing of these services.

Parliament insisted successfully during the legislative procedure, *inter alia*, that blind, visually impaired and deaf people, those with impaired hearing and the mentally handicapped should be included amongst those who must be given help at an airport.

Parliament specified that air carriers and airport managing bodies must provide their personnel with training on providing direct assistance to people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility.

Furthermore, the EP decided that quality standards for assistance provided to people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility should be established in all airports with annual traffic exceeding 150 000 passenger movements per year. This is considerably more extensive than the Commission proposal, which only applied to airports handling more than 2 million passengers a year.

Reference: Regulation 1107/2006 of 5 July 2006¹¹

Rapporteur: Robert Evans (PES, UK)

3.7. EP Pushed for an EU-Wide 'Black List' of Unsafe Airlines

With this 'black list' of unsafe airlines, drawn up by the European Institutions, passengers' rights to information have been considerably strengthened. The EU-wide black list will be updated at least every three months. It contains the names of all airlines for which there is evidence of serious safety defects or where it has become clear that the authorities responsible for an airline are unwilling or unable to implement safety norms or oversee an aircraft. Airlines in this black list are prohibited from flying in EU territory. It will no longer be possible for an aircraft which has been banned from taking off or landing in one Member State to fly to another Member State.

Parliament successfully pushed for a single EU-wide black list of unsafe airlines. The Commission's proposal originally planned 27 different lists, one per Member State.

Thanks to pressure from the European Parliament, this regulation also considerably strengthened passenger rights with regard to information and compensation:

¹¹ T6-0519/2005, 15/12/2005, Official Journal: L 204 26.07.2006, p. 0001-0010, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5234212.

The ticket vendor is required – regardless of how the booking is made - to inform passengers of the identity of the airline with which they will fly, as soon as it has been determined.

In particular: whenever the operating air carrier is changed after reservation, passengers must be informed at check-in, or at the time of boarding at the latest. If a ticket seller has not been informed of the identity of the operating air carrier, it shall not be responsible for not having complied with its obligations under the legislation.

Parliament also decided that passengers should have the right to reimbursement or re-routing if the air carrier was included on the black list after the reservation had been made and the flight had therefore been cancelled.

Reference: Regulation 2111/2005 of 14 December 2005¹²

Rapporteur: Christine De Veyrac (EPP-ED, FR)

3.8. Port Package: Rejection for the Second Time

For a second time the European Parliament rejected a Commission proposal on market access to port services, with 532 votes in favour, 120 against and 25 abstentions. This substantial majority of MEPs, mainly from the PSE, ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL, IND/DEM and UEN groups, but also with a considerable number from the EPP-ED group, felt that the proposal was counterproductive and would create uncertainty for the future of ports in the EU. The most controversial issue was again related to cargo handling, which employs thousands of dockers throughout the EU, and, in particular, the so-called 'self-handling' which would have allowed ship-owners to use their own crew for loading and unloading their ships. MEPs feared that it would open the door to social dumping and lead to major job losses among skilled dock workers. Parliament had already rejected a conciliation agreement between the Council and Parliament on port services in November 2003.

During the legislative process the political groups criticised the proposal not only for its content but also for the fact that the European Commission had presented what they considered to be a more or less identical proposal to the one they had rejected in 2003.

This result illustrates Parliament's concern that the draft Commission text still does not meet the need for a clear legal and legislative framework for Community ports. Key issues such as transparent State aid and other forms of support to ports, as well as fair competition between ports, should be reconsidered, with the involvement of Parliament and all those represented in the sector. After the rejection in the European Parliament, the Commission withdrew the proposal. By this rejection Parliament also underlined its decisive role as co-legislator.

Reference: Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on market access to port services (COM (2004) 654 final)

Rapporteur: Georg Jarzembowski (EPP-ED, DE)¹³

¹² T6-0428/2005, 16/11/2005, Official Journal: L 344 27.12.2005, p. 0015-0022, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5234222.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=191832

3.9. Railway Package: More Passenger Rights

As part of the third railway package, in autumn 2007 Council and Parliament adopted Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations. This regulation establishes rules on such matters as compensation in the event of substantial delays and undertakings' liability for passengers and their luggage in the event of accidents. When the regulation comes into force at the end of 2009, passengers who suffer delays will be entitled to a 25% reduction in the ticket price for a 60-minute delay and a 50% reduction for a delay of 120 minutes or more. Railway undertakings will also be responsible for providing comprehensive information to passengers on such matters as passenger rights, timetables, fastest journeys, lowest fares, accessibility, access conditions and availability of facilities for people with disabilities. Railway undertakings must also introduce non-discriminatory access rules for the transport of people with disabilities and people with reduced mobility.

Under certain conditions, national long-distance rail services and urban, suburban and regional services may be exempt from the regulation. Under the deal reached between the Council and the EP, when the law enters into force in 2009 all rail passengers will enjoy a series of basic rights (e.g. regarding rail companies' liability for passengers and their luggage, and the right to transport of people with reduced mobility).

Member States may exempt long-distance domestic rail services from the provisions of the regulation on non-basic rights (e.g. the right to take a bicycle on the train), for an initial period of five years, which may subsequently be extended for two further periods of up to five years. Urban, suburban and regional services can be granted an indefinite exemption from those same provisions.

The regulation on the rights and obligations of rail passengers was originally intended to apply only to passengers on international journeys. The European Parliament successfully pressed for extending the scope of the regulation by also granting passengers on domestic journeys the right to compensation.

Furthermore, the European Parliament could achieve improvements regarding the non-discriminatory access rules applicable to persons with reduced mobility which companies will be obliged to put in place. At unmanned stations, railway undertakings must make every reasonable effort to give people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility access to travel by rail. Finally, Parliament convinced the Council of the need for specially designated areas in trains for the carriage of baby carriages, wheelchairs, bicycles and sports equipment.

Reference: Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 of 23 October 2007¹⁴

Rapporteur: Dirk Sterckx (ALDE, BE)

3.10. More Competition to Revitalise the Railways

As with the first and second railway package, whereby full opening up of the freight transport market, including cabotage, took place from 1 January 2007, the European Parliament pressed in the third railway package for more competition between railways, focusing this time on passenger transport. During the legislative procedures for all three

¹⁴ T6-0356/2005, 28/09/2005, T6-0005/2007, 18/01/2007, T6-0403/2007, 25/09/2007, Official Journal: L 315 03.12.2007, p. 0014, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=241522.

railway packages, Parliament successfully pressed for rail transport markets to be opened up more quickly than originally envisaged by the Council of Ministers.

With the conclusion of Directive 2007/58/CE of 23 October 2007, Parliament achieved the opening of the market for international passenger transport services by 1 January 2010. This opening also includes the right to convey passengers between any railway station located on the route of an international transport service, including stations located in the same Member State. Under certain circumstances, however, the Member State may limit this right. The directive is therefore widely considered as a fair balance between the opening up of the market, on the one hand, and the protection of public transport services on the other.

The opening of the market is broadly seen as a key element behind the revitalisation of European railways. European railways have to become more competitive vis-à-vis other modes of transport. They must provide a realistic alternative for freight and passenger transport. European railways still face considerable challenges if they are to maintain their current share of total traffic volume and increase it in the medium term.

The European Parliament has also supported and shaped other key elements of the strategy for revitalising the railways and creating an integrated European railway area with a view to making a major contribution to strengthening rail transport, as an environmentally friendly mode of transport.

Reference: Directive 2007/58/EC of 23 October 2007¹⁵

Rapporteur: Georg Jarzembowski (EPP-ED, DE)

3.11. Towards Harmonised Quality Standards for EU Tourist Services

As a follow-up to an own-initiative report on sustainable tourism (rapporteur: Luís Queiró, EPP-ED, PT), the European Parliament made concrete proposals for a consistent and holistic policy approach to tourism at EU level. In particular, these proposals dealt with EU guidelines for the classification of tourist accommodation and an EU quality mark for tourism. Other proposals revolved around the relationship between tourism and visa policy, as well as promotion measures to boost the European tourism market.

The European Parliament requested a consolidation of the EU's multiplicity of local quality labels for better international recognition. The broad variety of quality labels had a negative impact on the industry's reliability and on transparency. Consumers regarded the system of classification as an important instrument for choosing accommodation. Parliament therefore considered it important that accurate information on the meaning of the classification in the different countries be easily available. Parliament considered that a set of guidelines based on common and uniform criteria for the entire EU could take into account the interests of the consumer. The Commission was asked to establish a methodology for creating such minimum standards on safety and quality of accommodation services. Furthermore, the Parliament called on the Commission to promote - in cooperation with the European catering trade organisation HOTREC - common tourist accommodation labelling processes in the different Member States and to promote quality models that had proved effective

¹⁵ T6-0354/2005, 28/09/2005, T6-0003/2007, 18/01/2007, T6-0401/2007, 25/09/2007, Official Journal: L 315 03.12.2007, p. 0044, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=241532.

elsewhere (for example the Qualmark in New Zealand), in order to improve transparency for tourists. The Transport Committee asked the Policy Department to draft a note on *Standardisation and Quality Labels for EU Tourist Services*¹⁶.

As regards visa policy, the EP called on the Schengen Member States to establish common consular desks for granting visas to non-EU applicants. These desks should apply the same visa criteria and improve the welcome offered to visa applicants. The need to simplify and reduce the cost of visa application procedures was stressed in this report. Procedures should also be simplified for tourists issued with visas for non-Schengen EU countries. It was nevertheless recognised that the harmonisation of visa application procedures and general facilitation of access to Europe for tourists from third countries had to be compatible with the security rules required in order to combat illegal immigration, terrorism and organised crime.

Member States and the Commission were called on to initiate an 'Access for All' EC label that would guarantee accessibility of facilities to people with reduced mobility. This label would cover facilities such as accommodation, restaurants, leisure and natural sites, monuments and museums.

The European Parliament also urged the Commission and the Member States to promote upcoming sectors such as health, eco- and cultural tourism, for instance the cross-border memorial cycle route along the former Iron Curtain, as an example of 'gentle mobility in tourism' and as a symbol of the reunification of Europe.

Reference: Non-legislative report¹⁷

Rapporteur: Paolo Costa (ALDE, IT)

3.12. EP Pushes Council for Adoption of Third Maritime Safety Package

As with the first and second maritime packages ('Erika I' and 'Erika II'), which were adopted after the shipping disasters involving the 'Erika' (1999) and the 'Prestige' (2002), the European Parliament again pressed successfully for significant improvements in maritime safety rules.

After difficult negotiations, an agreement on this third maritime package was reached between the Council and the European Parliament in December 2008. The new package was intended to improve both the safety of ships and the action taken in the event of an accident. It comprises the following elements:

- a directive on the fulfilment of flag-State obligations, which aims to monitor more effectively compliance with the international regulations by ships sailing under the flag of a Member State.
- a recasting of the directive on port state control with the aim of ensuring more effective and more frequent inspections, particularly of ships at risk, through new monitoring mechanisms subject to risk profiles;

¹⁶ Oliver BENNETT, Monique de GREEVE, Chrystel CANCEL, Emerging Markets Group (EMG) Ltd, [Standardisation and Quality Labels for EU Tourist Services](#), European Parliament, 2007

¹⁷ T6-0575/2007, 29/11/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5353772.

- an amendment to the directive on the Community's vessel traffic monitoring and information system, which focuses, among other things, on improving the legal framework conditions relating to emergency moorings ('ports of refuge') for ships in distress and the further development of the SafeSeaNet;
- a recasting of the directive, as well as a regulation on classification societies, particularly with regard to the introduction of an independent quality control system for eliminating the flaws that still exist in inspection and certification procedures for the world fleet;
- a directive on investigations after accidents at sea covering the common principles for carrying out investigations at sea and a system for pooling the results;
- a regulation on liability and compensation for personal injury caused by accidents on passenger vessels at sea;
- a directive on the third-party liability of ship owners.

In the context of the revision of the directive on a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system, the European Parliament ensured that Member States must designate a competent authority with the power to take independent decisions. This authority, in the event of a rescue operation, would decide on the best course of action to prevent a disaster, including which port should accommodate a 'ship in need of assistance'. This legal framework relating to emergency ports - for which the European Parliament has called on several previous occasions - is seen as a key element in improving maritime safety. Without a system of emergency ports, valuable time might be wasted in deciding which port should accommodate a vessel in distress.

Furthermore, despite initial strong opposition within the Council, the Parliament succeeded in reaching agreement on all the above items in one package. Two proposals that are part of this package, relating to flag-State obligations and civil liability respectively, had been blocked in Council for a very long time owing to their controversial content. At second reading, Parliament had introduced amendments from these two 'missing files' into other maritime package reports. Following this, the Council agreed on common positions on these two remaining pieces of legislation so that a final agreement could be reached between the two institutions.

In this way Parliament ensured that the final compromise retained a number of key elements, thus representing considerable progress in terms of maritime safety. *Inter alia* Parliament achieved the following:

- All ships flying the flag of a Member State and all ships flying the flag of a third country are required to have insurance in place when they enter a maritime area under a Member State's jurisdiction - with liability ceilings high enough to ensure that in most cases victims can be properly compensated.
- Possible penalties when a ship is found not to be carrying an insurance certificate on board. The ship in question may either be detained according to the procedure provided for in the directive on port state control or expelled by the competent authority. Following the expulsion order, every Member State is obliged to refuse entry of the ship into any of its ports until the ship owner provides the insurance certificate.
- Whilst waiting for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) audit scheme for flag states to become mandatory, Member States must subject their maritime authorities to such an audit and publish the results.
- Member States must put in place a quality management system for their maritime authorities, to be certified in accordance with international standards.

In addition, a declaration by all the EU Member States confirmed their commitment:

- to ratifying the main international conventions on maritime safety by 1 January 2012,
- to applying the IMO Flag State Code and the related audit scheme for maritime authorities,
- to encouraging the IMO to make these two instruments mandatory world wide.

From the first to the second and - via the Temporary Committee on Improving Safety at Sea (MARE) in 2004 - to this third maritime safety package, the European Parliament was, over the course of two terms, the driving force behind significant improvements in maritime safety. Once again, the EP's continuous pressure and well developed proposals for the third package paid off in terms of safer maritime transport.

References: final adoption and publication in the Official Journal pending (January 2009)

Rapporteurs:

Paolo Costa (ALDE, IT) for *Liability of carriers of passengers in the event of a accidents*¹⁸

Luis de Grandes Pascual (EPP-ED, ES) for *Ship inspection and survey organisations*¹⁹

Dominique Vlasto (EPP-ED, FR) for *Port state control*²⁰

Dirk Sterckx (ALDE, BE) for the *Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system*²¹

Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL, CZ) for *Investigations into accidents and incidents at sea*²²

Emanuel Jardim Fernandes (PES, PT) for *Flag state obligations*²³

Gilles Savary (PES, FR) for *Civil liability and financial guarantees of ship owners*²⁴:

¹⁸ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5314832

¹⁹ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5647662;
www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5311432

²⁰ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5309062

²¹ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5302932

²² OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5314242

²³ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5317232

²⁴ OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5311632

4. REGIONAL POLICY

4.1. Introduction: The Regional Development Committee's Role

The Committee on Regional Development plays an important role in informing the European Parliament's approach to the development of the regions of the EU-27. It is responsible for overseeing and advising the Parliament about the implementation of the key EU regional development funding instruments (the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, in particular). A list of examples of the Committee's most prominent initiatives during this Parliamentary term is set out below.

In addition to its role in bringing forward reports such as those listed below, the Committee has been tasked with coordinating the European Parliament's relations with other important actors in the area of regional development. The Committee has therefore sought to have an active dialogue with the key organisations, and to ensure that its work is widely accessible to, and understood by, those with related activities. The Committee received the European Commissioner responsible for regional development, Ms Danuta Hübner, on a regular basis (see below 4.10.). It also maintained links on behalf of Parliament with the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. Their members were regularly invited to give evidence during public hearings organised by the Committee on Regional Development.

In autumn 2008, the Committee once again participated as an institutional partner in the 'Open Days'. This event is the biggest annual gathering of EU and regional policy-makers, with some 5 000 participants from 217 regions in 32 countries attending the event in Brussels.

4.2. Regional Solidarity Support: EP Approves EUR 308 billion for Regional Development

In July 2006 Parliament gave its assent to the Structural Funds package for 2007 to 2013 with the adoption of five separate reports²⁵. They define the objectives, the financial resources available and the criteria for their allocation in an enlarged EU. Some EUR 308 billion - or 35.7 per cent of the total EU budget - were made available to spend, as scheduled, from 1 January 2007. The package was agreed after at times heated negotiations, with the European Parliament taking a particularly strong line vis-à-vis the UK Government's wish for a slimmed-down Structural Funds package, and indeed for a reduced overall EU budget. The European Parliament has the power to accept or reject the Structural Funds general regulations, and was successful in securing changes regarding the environment and sustainable development, improved accessibility for people with disabilities and strengthened consultation arrangements at local level, ensuring the widest possible input into the regional development debate.

Reference: COM (2004) 0492

²⁵ T6-0289/2006, 04/07/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5188922.
T6-0286/2006, 04/07/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5189402.
T6-0290/2006, 04/07/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5188642.
T6-0280/2005, 06/07/2005, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5189522.
T6-0285/2006, 04/07/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5189512.

Rapporteur: Konstantinos Hatzidakis (EPP-ED, EL)

Reference: COM (2004) 0495

Rapporteur: Claudio Fava (PES, IT)

Reference: COM (2004) 0494

Rapporteur: Alfonso Andria (ALDE, IT)

Reference: COM (2004) 0496

Rapporteur: Jan Olbrycht (EPP-ED, PL)

Reference: COM (2004) 0493

Rapporteur: José Albino Silva Peneda (EPP-ED, PT)

4.3. EU Funding for Better Housing

Decent and affordable housing for EU citizens has been given a boost by the European Regional Development Fund, which allows new Member States to apply for EU support for certain housing renovation projects. This aid is destined to help people save energy in their homes, thus reducing energy bills while also safeguarding the environment. In May 2007 the European Parliament voted strongly in favour of proposals to extend this availability to older Member States too, from 2009²⁶. The European Parliament based its vote on the pressing need for EU citizens in all Member States to have access to adequate housing in urban areas, many of which are currently threatened by physical deterioration and the effects of social exclusion.

To help shape the debate in committee, the Policy Department provided a study²⁷ analysing the role of sustainable and renewable energies in the 2000-2006 Structural Funds programming period, by focusing on the different Member States' Operational Programmes and on examples of good practice. The study also reported on the main measures aimed at sustainable and renewable energies and described a series of proposals intended to increase the use of Structural Funds to promote these types of energy in the 2007-2013 period.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Alfonso Andria (ALDE, IT)

4.4. EU Solidarity: Money to be Available to Combat Acts of Terrorism and Public Health Threats

In May 2006 the European Parliament voted for a widening of the scope of the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) to include the consequences of terrorist attacks, major public health emergencies and industrial disasters²⁸. The Solidarity Fund was created in 2002 in response to the major flooding in Central Europe. It can grant up to EUR 1 billion a year to

²⁶ T6-0183/2007, 10/05/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5341482.

²⁷ Gruppo Soges, Eurofocus, ERAC *Using Sustainable and Renewable Energies in the Context of the Structural Policy 2007-2013*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2007.

²⁸ T6-0218/2006, 18/05/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5242592.

a Member State to help its response to such contingencies, examples of which include floods, fires and drought. Without in any way allowing those responsible to walk away from their liability, in instances, for example, where an industrial or technological disaster is responsible for the crisis (in accordance with the 'Polluter Pays' principle), the European Parliament voted for measures to make financial assistance available as rapidly as possible, for example for the provision of immediate medical assistance and measures to protect the public.

In the spring of 2006 Members adopted a resolution on forest fires and floods, expressing their solidarity with the victims and others affected²⁹. The EU Presidency was asked to pay close attention to the development of the EU's capacity to respond rapidly. At the same time the European Parliament called upon Member State governments to do their utmost to achieve the Kyoto goals, given the impact of climate change on the EU's territory. The Parliament sought from the Commission the highest possible level of flexibility in applying the European Solidarity Fund to such events.

Late in 2007 the European Parliament adopted a report that considered the question of dealing with the regional impact of earthquakes³⁰. Among the actions supported, the EP urged an addition to the Solidarity Fund regulation that would facilitate the use of the Fund to repair earthquake damage. Six Member States are seismically active, while seven others are at significant risk of damage from quakes. The Commission was therefore invited to draw up proposals for action needed by the EU in the event of an earthquake disaster affecting the EU.

Reference: COM (2005) 0108

Rapporteur: Rolf Berend (EPP-ED, DE)

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Gerardo Galeote (EPP-ED, ES)

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Nikolaos Vakalis (EPP-ED, EL)

4.5. Supporting the Northern Irish Peace Process

The current European Parliament has consistently supported Northern Ireland in the process of achieving peace and reconciliation. The Parliament has shown its support through its praise for the European Regional Development Fund-assisted PEACE programme (EUR 200 million) and through its endorsement of the continuation of the EUR 15 million per year of European support to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

In 2006 the European Parliament voted for a continuation of the IFI funding until the fund is wound up in 2010 (other funders are the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), in view of the Fund's contribution to economic and social progress and its work in promoting dialogue between nationalists and unionists across Ireland.

In 2008 the European Parliament adopted a report drafted by Bairbre de Brún (GUE-NGL, UK) which endorsed the positive results and best practice achieved by the PEACE

²⁹ T6-0223/2006, 18/05/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5282162.

³⁰ T6-0507/2007, 14/11/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5498552.

programmes to date³¹. Members are now considering how the work of PEACE could help other regions living in conflict, whether in the EU or outside.

Since 1995 three generations of the PEACE programme have seen total allocations of over EUR 2 billion to a wide range of sectors and groups, enabling different sections of the community to work together to build bridges. The importance of a 'bottom-up' approach, involving local empowerment and consultation, was stressed by the rapporteur.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Bairbre De Brún (GUE-NGL, UK)

4.6. Volunteering Empowers the EU Citizen

A report drawn up by Marion Harkin (ALDE, IE), recently adopted in plenary, concludes that volunteering is good for the citizen, for the community, for regional economic development and for the national economy³². Research found that over 100 million EU citizens undertake voluntary work, and that for every euro spent supporting their efforts there is a return of between 3 and 8 euros. Not only do volunteers help to implement EU-funded programmes such as INTERREG and the Northern Ireland PEACE Programme, but the contribution of volunteering to gross domestic product in some States is estimated to be significant. The report thus called for more efforts by the EU to create policies that can help to promote Europe's 'social capital'. This would help the EU to establish direct links between the EU and its citizens and communities. The report also calls on the Commission and Member States to consider how better to facilitate the work of voluntary organisations by the introduction of VAT exemptions.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Marion Harkin (ALDE, IE)

4.7. MEPs Challenge Unjustified Company Relocations

In the context of its oversight of regional development policies destined to bring about economic and social cohesion in the EU, Members of the European Parliament adopted a report in March 2006 calling on the European Commission to impose penalties on companies indulging in unjustified relocations³³. The companies in question are those which, having received EU regional development support for their business, awarded as part of an overall package of aid to the region in which the company located, then relocate within 7 years of receiving that aid. A key objection by the EP to this practice is the threat of job losses in regions already badly affected by economic decline - precisely the type of regions that EU rules should be seeking to help. MEPs backed a call for the Commission to require repayment of regional state aid given to any company that subsequently takes an early decision to relocate.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Alain Hutchinson (PES, BE)

³¹ T6-0205/2008, 20/05/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5498522.

³² T6-0131/2008, 22/04/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5498492.

4.8. Supporting EU Companies in Island Regions with Fuel and Energy Costs

Early in 2007 the EP adopted an own-initiative report³⁴ asking the European Commission to explore whether State aid could be given to the island regions of the EU, where fuel and energy costs can adversely affect the competitiveness of local industries. In identifying the burden imposed upon island regions by the fluctuating cost of fuel, the European Parliament highlighted the knock-on impact of fuel prices on the cost of transporting materials between the islands and the mainland of the EU. The Commission was invited in particular to look at how the State aid regime might be adjusted to level the playing field and make the islands more attractive to investors.

The needs of the EU islands should also be given closer attention by the Commission's Regional Policy experts, through the establishment of a specific administrative unit. The report also encouraged greater use of funding instruments such as those offered by the European Investment Bank and its partners (JASPERS, JEREMIE). The current regional aid rules would apply until 2013, thus any revision would be in place with effect from 2014, coinciding with the next generation of regional development support from the EU.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Francesco Musotto (EPP-ED, IT)

4.9. Reducing Regional Development Disparities

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita differs enormously across the regions of the EU-27. In Inner London (UK), GDP per capita is 303 per cent of the EU average, while in North-Eastern Romania it is only 24 per cent.

A report approved by the European Parliament in the summer of 2007³⁵ called for resolute action to reduce the most acute development shortcomings in the poorest regions of the EU and help the countries concerned to benefit from the increased GDP that preliminary estimates suggest can be achieved through effective implementation of the 2007-2013 cohesion policy allocations. Investment in information technology infrastructure and education in its use, and building up the capacity of administrators in new Member States to 'absorb' the generous package of support available from the EU are key elements in this battle to reduce regional disparities.

With unemployment of over 20 per cent in some of the poorest regions, the report recommended that the European Social Fund should be used to enhance the basic qualifications of young people, women and the older generation in particular. Since EU funds must be 'matched' by support from the Member State and the private sector, it is essential that the relevant public administrations can help the regions meet fund-matching obligations and properly implement the regulations that govern the Structural Funds. Public-Private Partnerships were advocated by the European Parliament as a way to involving private capital in projects.

³³ T6-0077/2006, 14/03/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5217822.

³⁴ T6-0082/2007, 15/03/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5341452.

³⁵ T6-0356/2007, 12/07/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5363002.

A study³⁶ carried out by the Policy Department at the request of the Committee on Regional Development claimed that the territorial dimension of disparities is important for policy makers, yet current indicators, such as per capita GDP and unemployment rates, oversimplify the picture. Different analytical methods and indicators, such as multi-scalar analysis and a multi-criteria approach, promise to give a more suitable but inevitably more complex picture on which to base policy making and decisions.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (PES, PL)

4.10. Regional Development Committee Scrutinises EU Regional Spending

In January 2008, the Committee on Regional Development took evidence from Danuta Hübner, European Regional Policy Commissioner. Members wished to question the Commissioner about the feared 'loss' of Structural Fund money from the EU budget, following expressions of dissatisfaction from the European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee about the management of Structural Funds in some countries and regions. This followed a Court of Auditors statement accusing the Commission of incorrect reimbursement of funding. Ten Member States were said by the Commissioner to be at risk of errors or irregularities in spending and the Commissioner assured the committee that her officials were monitoring action plans for improvement prepared by each of the Member States in question.

4.11. Building the EU's Capacity to Innovate

The dynamic and interactive process of developing the EU's innovative capacity was the subject of an own-initiative report adopted by the European Parliament in May 2007³⁷. Among the recommendations in the report were the principles of low-cost or free access to broadband and of support for cross-border cooperation among regional academic and business stakeholders. Another means of promoting improved cross-sectoral collaboration would be support for the development of 'clusters' of research and business units.

The Commission and Member States were called on to provide equal access for all the EU's citizens to education at every level. Greater access to information-based working was supported and the creation of appropriate financial and risk-management mechanisms encouraged, possibly for use alongside the existing European Investment Bank/European Investment Fund instruments, JASPERS, JEREMIE and JESSICA.

Reference: Own-initiative report

Rapporteur: Mieczysław Janowski (UEN, PL)

³⁶ Nordregio, UMS RIATE, RRG Spatial Planning and Geoinformation, Eurofutures, LIG [Regional Disparities and Cohesion: What Strategies for the Future?](#), European Parliament, 2007.

³⁷ T6-0184/2007, 10/05/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5341052.

4.12. Further Reading

At the request of the Committee on Regional Development, the Policy Department on Structural and Cohesion Policies carried out the following studies:

UMS RIATE, Géographie-cités, LIG, IGEAT, Université d'Umeå, Université de Naples, CUGUAT – TIGRIS, [*Shrinking regions: A paradigm shift in demography and territorial development*](#), Brussels, European Parliament, 2008.

Eurofocus, [*Best practices in the field of Regional policy and obstacles to the use of Structural Funds*](#), Brussels, European Parliament, 2008.

OïR Managementdienste GmbH, [*Follow-up of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter- towards a European Action Programme for spatial development and territorial cohesion*](#), Brussels, European Parliament, 2008

5. AGRICULTURE

Above and beyond consultation procedures, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) has adopted some **own-initiative reports** on issues where the European Parliament made a difference to European citizens, especially as regards farmers and consumers.

5.1. A New CAP in Progress: the 'Health Check'

On 12 March 2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the CAP 'Health Check' in response to the Commission's Communication presented in November 2007.

In the resolution Parliament considered the scrapping of all forms of regulation of agricultural markets to be politically undesirable since, as the current situation shows, European and global reserves stand at dramatically low levels. This is having negative repercussions on consumer purchasing power and farmers' incomes, while at the same time encouraging speculation. Moreover, instruments are needed to combat the economic downturn and the risks posed by health incidents and increasingly frequent natural disasters arising from the unsettled climate. In view of the anticipated increase in environmental dangers and significant price fluctuations, Parliament considered additional risk prevention to be of vital importance as a safety net.

Members also took the view that direct payments would remain vitally necessary in the future as a basic income guarantee, not only in the event of market failure but also for the provision of public goods by farmers and as compensation for Europe's high environmental, food safety, animal welfare and social standards.

Members rejected a reduction in the total budget of the CAP for the period up to 2013. However, they supported Commission efforts to secure appropriate funding for a sustainable policy for rural areas under the second pillar of the CAP. MEPs considered that a progressive modulation of 1st pillar spending could be envisaged. The funds from progressive modulation are to be distributed according to the prevailing rules governing modulation funds and therefore must remain in the region or Member State in which they accrue. This progressive modulation, applicable over the 2009-2013 period, will consist in a 1% reduction in direct aid totalling between EUR 10 000 and EUR 100 000, 2% between EUR 100 000 and EUR 200 000, 3% between EUR 200 000 and EUR 300 000, and 4% for aid exceeding EUR 300 000.

Reference³⁸: Non-legislative initial document: COM (2007) 722

Rapporteur: Lutz Goepel (EPP-ED, DE)

The Commission's legislative proposals on the Health Check were presented on 20 May 2008. Three reports had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (PES, PT) on 19 November 2008. The main amendments adopted were as follows:

Modulation: The plenary voted that any amount of direct aids to be granted to a farmer exceeding EUR 10 000 should be reduced by 7% by 2013, with rates of progressive modulation set at +1% for EUR 100 000 – 199 999, +2% for EUR 200 000 – 299 999, and +3% points above EUR 300 000.

³⁸ A6-0047/2008, T6-0093/2008, 12.3.2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5531352.

Specific support (Article 68): Member States should be able to use up to 15% of their national ceilings of payments to support 'hard-hit' sectors such as livestock and dairy, and to contribute to both insurance and mutual schemes (for losses caused by climatic events or animal and plant diseases) with increased Community co-financing.

Sectors: Milk quotas should be increased by 1% in 2009/2010, with a Commission review of the situation in 2010. Parliament also called for the creation of a milk fund to help restructure the sector. Market intervention or management instruments should also be retained in the grain, meat and dairy sectors, with coupled payments preserved for livestock farmers and certain sensitive sectors such as dried fodder, protein and flax.

Reference³⁹: Legislative proposals: COM (2008) 306

Rapporteur: Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (PES, PT)

On this topic the Policy Department carried out a number of relevant studies at the request of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development: *Reflections on the possibilities for the future Development of the CAP*⁴⁰, *Reflection on the possibilities for the future development of the CAP - the Rural Development perspectives*⁴¹, *Multifunctionality and the CAP: Territorial Proposal*⁴², *Analysis of the Health Check Proposals: the Reform of the Decoupling System*⁴³, *Analysis of the Health Check Proposals: the Reform of the Mechanisms for Direct Support*⁴⁴.

5.2. What Future for Young Farmers under Ongoing Reform of the CAP?

In future the CAP must seek to remove the barriers currently facing young people wishing to set up in farming by making generation change one of its priorities. The EP resolution drew attention to the continuing difficulties stemming from high setup costs (including agricultural property sale and rental prices) and the need to invest continuously in tangible capital and human potential in order to make technological and logistical improvements.

The Commission was called upon to propose, in its legislative proposal on the Health Check, that the aid for young farmers provided for in the legislation on rural development should feature among the compulsory measures included in the plans drawn up by the Member States, which should also be accompanied by an increase in the amount of setting-up support.

References⁴⁵: Own-initiative report (INI (2007) 2194)

Rapporteur: Donato Tommaso Veraldi (ALDE, IT)

³⁹A6-0390/2008, A6-0401/2008, A6-0402/2008, T6-0549/2008, T6-0550/2008, T6-0551/2008, 19.11.2008, OEIL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5642272>; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5642252>; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5642232>.

⁴⁰ Jean Christophe Bureau, Heinz Peter Witzke, EuroCARE GmbH, *Reflection on the Possibilities for the Future Development of the CAP*, European Parliament, 2007.

⁴¹ ÖIR-Managementdienste GmbH, *Reflection on the Possibilities for the Future Development of the CAP – the Rural Development perspectives*, European Parliament, 2007.

⁴² Jesús Gonzalez Regidor, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, *Multifunctionality and the CAP: Territorial Proposal*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2007.

⁴³ Jesús Gonzalez Regidor, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, *Analysis of the Health Check Proposals: the Reform of the Decoupling System*, European Parliament, 2007.

⁴⁴ Mr Allan Buckwell, Country Land and Business Association, *Analysis of the Health Check Proposals: the Reform of the Mechanisms for Direct Support*, European Parliament, 2007.

5.3. The CAP and Global Food Security

For thirty years food prices have fallen in real terms both in Europe and globally. This trend has been reversed over the past months by sudden and steep upward movements in world agricultural commodity prices.

The price surge affected several commodities at the same time: cereals, meat, and dairy products all recorded two-digit or even three-digit increases in less than a year. These movements are the result of a complex combination of structural and more temporary factors.

At EU level, policy initiatives must pursue three complementary lines of intervention: actions to address and mitigate short- and medium-term effects of the food price 'shock'; actions to contribute to the global effort to tackle the effects of the price rises on poor populations; and, last but not least, actions to increase agricultural supply and ensure food security in the longer term. The CAP could make explicit adjustments to respond directly to the exceptionally high price levels.

References⁴⁶: Own-initiative report (INI (2008) 2153)

Rapporteur: Mairead McGuinness (EPP-ED,IE)

5.4. Risk and Crisis Management in Agriculture

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up in response to the Commission's paper on risk and crisis management in agriculture on 16 February 2006.

Parliament stated that the priority of risk management in agriculture should be to serve the general interest, guaranteeing the supply of healthy foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials to the population and safeguarding the environment against damage. It felt that the three risk- and crisis-management options being considered by the Commission (insurance against natural disasters, mutual funds and basic income guarantees) were not, in fact, preventive measures for reducing risks or damage, but financing models for providing compensation in the event of damage. The Commission was proposing that the measures be financed from 1% of funds from modulation, or more precisely from national rural development programmes, which, according to expert opinion, would probably fall far short of the resources required for the measures proposed.

The Commission should therefore examine alternative sources of funding for these measures. Parliament observed that the new Member States were excluded from the modulation mechanism until 2013, and direct payments in these countries were subject to a gradual increase to the full amount (phasing-in), and it should therefore be ensured that they had access to other CAP funding.

Earlier in the legislative procedure the Policy Department had published the study *Risks and Crisis Management in Agriculture*⁴⁷ on this same topic.

Reference⁴⁸: Non- legislative initial document: COM (2005) 074

Rapporteur: Friedrich Wilhelm Graefe Zu Baringdorf (Greens/EFA, DE)

⁴⁵ A6-0182/2008, T6-0258/2008. 5.6.2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5531332.

⁴⁶ A6-0505/2008, T6-0006/2009, 13.1.2009, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5650602.

⁴⁷ University of Napoli Federico II, *Risks and Crisis Management in Agriculture*, European Parliament, 2005.

⁴⁸ A6-0014/2006, T6-0067/2006, 16.2.2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5241902.

5.5. Natural Disasters, Fires, Floods and Droughts: Agricultural Aspects

Parliament believed that rural development policy could play a useful role in the prevention of natural disasters. It stressed that the drastic reduction in resources for rural development hindered the drafting of action plans to prevent damage caused by natural disasters. It recommended, however, that national and regional rural development plans give priority to measures aimed at the causes of the disasters (*inter alia*, fighting erosion, repopulating woodland with appropriate species, preserving firebreaks, hydraulic projects, maintaining woodland, and water-saving agro-environmental action).

Parliament felt that the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) should continue to cover intervention in the case of disasters which, although significant, were under the established damage threshold but involved severe and lasting repercussions on the living conditions of the inhabitants of a given region, with the possibility of extraordinary assistance existing in such cases. The Commission must submit a legislative proposal introducing a flexibility clause which would enable the existing policy instruments, notably the EUSF, dealing with natural disasters in the agricultural sector to be properly financed by using CAP headings that were currently unused every year.

Moving on, Parliament urged the Commission to provide support for measures aimed at reducing the combustibility of forests, such as encouraging their profitability and sustainable management, and using residual forest biomass as renewable energy. The Member States and the Commission were also asked to implement a programme for the exchange of experiences on the application of new technologies for the management and monitoring of forest fires, and to draw up procedures for European-level validation of the qualifications of technical staff. It was essential, furthermore, that within the framework of the rural development plans, priority be given to actions tending to combat structural rural problems (*inter alia*, depopulation, abandoning of farmland, protection of the countryside from intensive building, deforestation, and excessive fragmentation of woodland ownership) which, if they were not held in check, would increase future levels of potential risk.

Reference⁴⁹: Own-initiative report (INI (2005) 2195)

Rapporteur: Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (PES, PT)

5.6. Situation and Prospects of Agriculture in Mountainous Regions

Some 19% of the population of Europe lives and works in mountainous areas. These provide a unique habitat for people and other living organisms, in which all aspects of human existence are closely linked to the balance and rhythm of nature. Mountains can be seen as a multifunctional habitat and are characterised by a host of natural characteristics: steep slopes, weather conditions, erosion, height differences, high altitude, rock formations, etc.

At present there are as many different legal frameworks for Europe's mountain areas as there are Member States in the EU. In the best of cases, the 'mishmash' of sectoral policies applied might not necessarily hamper the aforementioned need for sustainability and a long-term approach, but it is also not best placed to serve it.

⁴⁹ A6-0152/2006, T6-0222/2006, 18.5.2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5282212

What is required is a sensible framework that combines regulations and assistance in the best possible way to assist Europe's mountain regions in their efforts to achieve sustainable and forward-looking competitiveness.

The European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development has asked the Policy Department to carry out studies relevant in this domain, including one on *Shrinking regions: a paradigm shift in demography and territorial development*⁵⁰ and an older one on policy towards mountain areas *Towards an European Policy for Mountain Regions*⁵¹.

Reference⁵²: Own-initiative report (INI (2008) 2066)

Rapporteur: Michl Ebner (EPP-ED, DE)

5.7. New Animal Health Strategy for the European Union

On 22 May 2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Commission Communication on a new animal health strategy for the European Union 2007-2013.

Parliament welcomed the development of a strategic approach to EU animal health policy, but called for greater ambition and for a longer-term view from the Commission when bringing forward its legislative proposals.

Members pointed out that the proposed strategy could produce positive results if clear and transparent arrangements were laid down for the funding of the individual measures, something that the Animal Health Strategy Communication failed to do. They criticised the Commission for making no reference in the Communication to the funding required for its policy. Parliament drew attention to the fact that the common animal health policy is one of the most integrated EU policies and that most of its funding should be covered by the Community budget, which should not preclude the financial responsibility of the Member States and farmers.

Parliament was dissatisfied about the indications that individual measures would be financed from existing funds, and called on the Commission to advocate enhancing the possibilities of the current veterinary fund, preparing its arguments for the budget discussions that would be launched in 2009. It pointed out that the animal health strategy should also cover the activities of abattoirs, animal transport businesses and animal feed manufacturers and suppliers, while taking account of the need for administrative simplification.

Reference⁵³: Non-legislative initial document: COM (2007)539

Rapporteur: Janusz Wojciechowski (UEN, PL)

⁵⁰ UMS RIATE, Géographie-cités, LIG (University Joseph Fourier), IGEAT (Free University of Brussels), University of Umeå, University of Naples, CUGUAT – TIGRIS (University Alexandru Ioan Cuza), [Shrinking Regions: a Paradigm shift in Demography and Territorial Development](#), Brussels, European Parliament, 2008.

⁵¹ International Centre for Alpine Environments (ICALPE), [Towards an European Policy for Mountain Regions](#), European Parliament, 1998.

⁵² A6-0327/2008, T6-0438/2008, 23.9.2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5608682.

⁵³ A6-0147/2008, T6-0235/2008, 22.5.2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5608682.

5.8. The Protection and Welfare of Animals

On 11 May 2006 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on a Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals. The EP called for stricter animal welfare rules in the EU. The report also called on the Commission to submit plans for animal protection labelling, to urge the strengthening of animal protection in World Trade Organisation negotiations, and to ban seal and 'cruelty product' imports into the Union.

Parliament viewed as regrettable the fact that EU rules on the transport of live animals were frequently flouted in practice. It supported the idea of introducing a label guaranteeing respect for European standards, but acknowledged that an accumulation of measures designed to improve animal welfare could have negative consequences for the competitiveness of the European farming sector. It was also important to avoid all dumping in third countries and any deterioration in the treatment of animals in those countries. Parliament therefore emphasised the urgent need to include a tightening of animal protection measures on the agenda for WTO negotiations, in order to raise international welfare standards. It also proposed imposing embargoes on countries where production of animal products involved cruelty.

Reference⁵⁴: Non-legislative initial document: COM (2006)013

Rapporteur: Elizabeth Jeggle (EPP-ED, DE)

5.9. Promotion of Crops for Non-Food Purposes

Parliament stressed the importance of increasing support for non-food crop technology to enhance the potential of industry. It called on the Commission to define a Community strategy and action plan to promote renewable energy sources in order to contribute to guaranteeing the security of food supply and improving energy efficiency in the EU.

Parliament stressed that particular care should be taken to avoid any intensification of production which might have adverse effects on the environment such as polluting the soil with fertiliser residues and plant protection products and depleting and contaminating water resources. In addition, the impact of energy crops on the rural environment should be monitored and thought should be given to the introduction of a regulation seeking to prevent the uncontrolled spread of crops recognised as invasive in given areas.

Parliament called on the Commission to encourage the production of speciality chemicals from agricultural raw material in order to increase farm income and provide the market with environmentally friendly and healthy products in the place of non-biodegradable chemical products. Applications for speciality crops could be very effective on a decentralised and small scale, and could therefore benefit a large number of farmers. Parliament also underlined the potential of agriculture to produce pharmaceutical crops for the production of vaccines and other products that aim to provide the medical industry with adequate instruments for health care.

Parliament also highlighted the potential offered by agricultural residues and waste for the production of heating, cooling and electricity, employing methods which were economically efficient and ecologically sound.

⁵⁴ A6-0290/2006, T6-0417/2006, 11.5.2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5319032.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that in advance of the legislative procedure, the European Parliament's committee on Agriculture and Rural Development had requested the Policy Department to carry out a study on non-food crops⁵⁵.

Reference⁵⁶: Own-initiative report (INI (2004) 2259)

Rapporteur: Neil Parish (EPP-ED, UK)

5.10. Biotechnology: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture in Europe

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Kyösti Virrankoski on 24 January 2007. The report called for more action by the Commission and the Council, but it sounded a cautious note with regard to genetically modified (GM) crops and wanted to see a clearer legal framework in this area.

Generally speaking, the committee encouraged efforts to develop biotechnologies in the EU, given that they could facilitate the development of sustainable methods of production, increased yield and more diverse products with less use of nitrates and other fertilisers, thus contributing to the protection of the environment and human health.

The committee also stressed that the development of biotechnologies could have other positive effects such as the production of entirely new products, including oral vaccines, and of greener energy sources as biomass, biogas and biofuels.

Against this background, the report called on the Commission to institute a high-level group composed of representatives of the Commission, the Council, the Parliament and all stakeholders in order to plan a strategy on biotechnology and agriculture in the EU.

As far as the legislative framework was concerned, the committee expressed support for the current precautionary approach to the approval of new biotechnology products.

Reference⁵⁷: Own-initiative report (INI (2006) 2059)

Rapporteur: Kyösti Virrankoski (ALDE, FI)

⁵⁵Dipartimento di Economia ed Ingegneria Agrarie (DEIAGRA), Università di Bologna, [The Competition between Food Crops and Non Food Crops for Energy : What are the Effects on Agricultural Structures and on the Use of Land](#), European Parliament, 2008.

⁵⁶ A6-0040/2006, T6-0116/2006, 23.3.2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5217932.

⁵⁷ A6-0032/2007, 21.5.2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5319532.

6. FISHERIES

6.1. Crisis in the Fisheries Industry

Since the beginning of the 6th legislature, the economic crisis faced by the fisheries industry has been a subject of worry for the European Parliament. In particular, Parliament has dealt with the impact of the increase in fuel prices.

In 2005 the European Parliament adopted a report⁵⁸ drafted by David Casa (EPP-ED, MT) on the **European Fisheries Fund (EFF)**. The amendments adopted focused on the permanent withdrawal of vessels from fishing and the financing of fishing equipment and investment in aquaculture. The main points were as follows:

The European Parliament wanted to widen the scope of the policy of **withdrawal of vessels** from fishing. It also proposed that the EFF should be allowed to make lump-sum payments to the crews of the vessels concerned.

Member States could introduce one-off compensation for owners of vessels and fishermen in the context of marine ecosystems protection plans if this resulted in a reduction in fishing capacity.

Aid could be granted for adaptations that enhanced on-board safety, living and working conditions, including engine replacement for reasons of safety, fuel economy or greater environmental friendliness, and on condition there was no increase in fishing capacity for all categories of fishing vessel. Special emphasis was placed on smaller and older boats.

Parliament proposed new clauses on public aid for renewal and modernisation of the fleet in the outermost regions.

The European Parliament wanted EFF investments to cover all stages of the aquaculture production chain, including the construction of new installations and the expansion and modernisation of existing installations, for species with good market prospects, provided they were technically and financially viable and did not generate excess production capacity.

On the sustainable development of coastal fishing areas, the EP rejected the restriction of EFF funding in communities with more than 100 000 inhabitants.

Reference: Regulation COM(2004) 497 of 14 July 2004

Rapporteur: David Casa (EPP-ED, MT)

In 2006 the EP adopted an own-initiative report⁵⁹ drafted by Sean Ó Neachtain (UEN, IE) on the precarious situation of **inshore fishing**. The report underlined the sector's 'vital contribution' to local economies and to the social fabric of coastal communities. Policy Department B had carried out a study on this issue beforehand at the request of the Fisheries Committee⁶⁰.

The EP called for a common definition at EU level of inshore fisheries. The Commission was urged to propose ways of harmonising data on inshore fisheries throughout the EU.

⁵⁸ T6-0282/2005, Official Journal C 157, 06.07.2006, p. 0097-0324 E, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5188932

⁵⁹ T6-0276/2006, 15/06/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5219262

⁶⁰ Centro Tecnológico del Mar – Fundación CETMAR Spain *Inshore Fisheries and the Problems Encountered by Inshore Fishermen*, European Parliament, 2005

Among other recommendations, the report called on the Commission to finance the modernisation of inshore fishery vessels and to bring forward specific educational and training programmes. It also expressed the wish for greater recognition of the role of women in the inshore fisheries sector and called for their economic and social rights to be guaranteed.

Reference: Non-legislative report

Rapporteur: Sean Ó Neachtain (UEN, IE)

Also in 2006, the European Parliament adopted a resolution⁶¹ based on the own-initiative report by Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL, PT) in response to the Commission communication on **improving the economic situation in the fishing industry**. The report regretted the 'lack of ambition' shown in the Commission's paper. Parliament's Committee on Fisheries had previously asked Policy Department B to draw up a study on this issue⁶².

Reference: COM(2006)0103 of 09 March 2006

Rapporteur: Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL, PT)

The EP criticised the fact that the measures proposed did not have a genuine socio-economic dimension and did not take account of 'the consequences of their implementation for vessel crews'. The EP regretted that, as regards rescue and restructuring aid, the Commission was continuing to block the possibility of granting compensatory payments and operating aid. It therefore stressed the need to create a guarantee fund with Community participation to stabilise fuel prices, granting a transitional compensatory payment for the fishing enterprises affected.

With regard to medium- and long-term measures, the EP stressed the need for the EFF to continue to grant aid for the renewal and modernisation of the fishing fleet - and in particular for the replacement of engines -, especially for small-scale inshore fishing, and for the replacement of vessels over 20 years old showing safety problems.

The Commission was also urged to recognise the specific nature of small-scale inshore fishing and artisanal fishing in the CFP, and to submit a proposal for a Community support programme to deal with the specific problems facing this segment of the industry.

The EP reiterated Parliament's request to the Commission to study the impact of factors other than fisheries, such as coastal and offshore pollution, industrial and agricultural effluents, deep-sea dredging and maritime transport, on the marine environment and on fish resources, in order to complement current management methods. Lastly, the EP stressed that it was essential to achieve a balance between the socio-economic situation and environmental sustainability, underlining the need to implement a mechanism for subsidising or compensating fishermen affected by the economic and social effects of stock recovery plans or other measures to provide increased protection for ecosystems, especially in less-favoured regions.

⁶¹ T6-0390/2006, 28/09/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5341542

⁶² LEI B.V., *The Impact of the Increase of the Oil Price in European Fisheries*, European Parliament, 2006

In 2007 the European Parliament adopted a resolution⁶³ based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL, PT) following the Commission's report on the implementation of the **common market organisation (CMO)** of fishery and aquaculture products. The Policy Department was asked to carry out considerable research on this issue⁶⁴.

Reference: COM(2006) 558 final of 29 September 2006

Rapporteur: Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL, PT)

The European Parliament stressed that it was necessary to carry out an urgent and far-reaching revision of the CMO in order to guarantee incomes in the sector, ensuring market stability, improving the marketing of fisheries products and increasing the value-added generated. The Commission was asked to submit a communication on the guidelines and a proposal for the revision of the CMO.

Parliament stressed the need to reinforce the CMO's financial resources, enabling it to guarantee Community funding at an adequate level for the fisheries sector's needs. The resolution stressed that the existing intervention mechanisms were characterised by a high level of concentration and called on the Commission to determine whether these mechanisms were the most suitable ones and whether they were sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the existing structures of production/marketing in the Member States, in order to improve the marketing of fish and ensure a fair income for producers.

The European Parliament stated that the compensatory payment for tuna should be extended and also called on the Commission to introduce a compensatory payment for sardines, as previously requested.

The Parliament stressed the importance of labelling and accurate consumer information. Commercial designations, including for imported products, needed to be examined and checked to ensure that consumers were not misled. The Commission was asked to accelerate the process of ecological certification of fishery products.

The report emphasised the need for the Structural Funds to contribute to the modernisation and creation of infrastructure for producers, covering units for refrigeration, processing, transport and marketing/distribution. It also emphasised that the intervention mechanisms must take account of the increased durability of fisheries products, and called for greater support for the improvement of the on-board handling of fish, especially investment in refrigeration. Parliament went on to stress the need for reinforcing the financial support mechanisms, for promoting the concentration of supply, notably via the funding of producers' organisations, and above all for promoting small-scale coastal and traditional fisheries. The operational programmes should ensure - with suitable financial support - that producers' organisations could market their products directly to boost the value-added of fisheries products. Parliament also called for the direct link of aid to the producers' organisations in the Community budget to be maintained, while also opening up the

⁶³ T6-0606/2007, 12/12/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484592

⁶⁴Jesús Iborra Martín, Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies, *The Reform of the Common Organisation of the Market of Fisheries Products of 2000*, European Parliament, 2007; Jesús Iborra Martín Department B Structural and Cohesion Policies, *Producers' Organisations and the Common Organisation of the Markets in Fisheries Products*, European Parliament, 2008

possibility of complementary aids in support of the operational programmes on the part of the Member States.

The resolution called on the Commission to evaluate the consequences of relations with third countries, and notably the impact of imports on first sale prices. It called on the Commission to take a firmer line in its evaluation of external trade relations, especially when activating the WTO safeguard mechanisms, so as not to compromise the objectives of Article 33 of the Treaty. The EP also called for the application to imported fisheries products sold on the internal market of the same rules and requirements as those applied to Community fisheries products, e.g. in terms of labelling, phytosanitary rules and minimum sizes.

In June 2008 the European Parliament adopted a joint resolution⁶⁵ on the **crisis of the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel prices**, for which a study on this topic was requested from the Policy Department⁶⁶.

The Members of the European Parliament expressed their solidarity with EU fishermen and called on the Commission and the Council to envisage measures for resolving the current situation in the fisheries sector. The EP reiterated its call to the Commission to revise the *de minimis* regulation so as to increase the aid to EUR 100 000 per vessel instead of per undertaking, bringing the level of aid closer to that in other economic sectors. Parliament also called on the Member States speed up procedures to enable the payment of aid under Commission Regulation (EC) No 875/2007 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to *de minimis* aid in the fisheries sector.

The European Parliament asked for the fishing fleet adjustment plans to be brought into force in all the Member States on a voluntary basis and for the necessary financial means, and with this aim:

- called on the Commission to establish priority criteria for the fleet segments most affected by the crisis;
- considered essential that national Operational Programmes under the European Fisheries Fund were reviewed to allow for more targeted spending;
- called for assistance with a one-off change in fishing gear to shift to less fuel-intensive fishing methods;
- encouraged the purchase of equipment to improve fuel efficiency.

The Parliament asked the Commission to submit proposals on a 7-year compensation scheme for CO₂ reduction in the fisheries sector, based on the current price of EUR 25 per tonne of CO₂.

Members also called on the Commission to support the creation of a specific fisheries-oriented research and development fund, within the 7th Framework Programme, to help finance projects aimed at investigating alternative energy sources and improving energy efficiency.

Finally, the European Parliament urged the Commission to formulate specific proposals to alleviate the situation in the areas most dependent on fisheries, having previously

⁶⁵ T6-0308/2008, 19/06/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5643522

⁶⁶ LEI B.V., [The Impact of the Increase of the Oil Price in European Fisheries](#), European Parliament, 2006.

commissioned research on this topic from the Policy Department on Structural and Cohesion Policies, which carried out the study *Regional Dependency on Fisheries*⁶⁷.

6.2. Management Measures for the Sustainable Exploitation of Fishery Resources in the Mediterranean Sea

This regulation is aimed at establishing sustainable fisheries in the region by improving the exploitation of aquatic living resources and protecting sensitive habitats, whilst taking into account the specific nature of the small-scale Mediterranean coastal fisheries.

The European Parliament had blocked this key regulation in the reform of the CFP at the end of the 5th legislature. In June 2005, adopting a report⁶⁸ drafted by Carmen Fraga Estevez (PPE-ED, ES), the new Parliament reached a compromise with the Commission that sought to restore a satisfactory situation to the stock as soon as possible. The majority of the EP's modifications referred to tuna fishing and to the minimum capture sizes linked with mesh size of nets and the authorised fishing gear characteristics.

The amendments were part of a compromise agreement negotiated between the rapporteur and the Commission:

- the minimum mesh size of towed nets should be 40 mm until 31 December 2006. Afterwards, they should be replaced by a square-meshed net of 40 mm at the cod-end or, at the duly justified request of the ship-owner, by a rhomboid-meshed net of 50 mm. The Commission to report on the implementation of these provisions to Parliament and the Council by 30 June 2010;
- the use of towed nets at depths of over 1 000 metres to be prohibited;
- minimum sizes to be reduced for sardines, hake, lobster and sole;
- the use of trawl nets and hydraulic dredges to be prohibited within 0.5 nautical miles instead of 1.5 nautical miles as proposed by the Commission;
- measures relating to highly migratory species should be laid down within regional fisheries organisations (in this case, the GFCM⁶⁹ and ICCAT⁷⁰) rather than by the Commission. In this way, such measures would be binding on both EU Member States and the remaining coastal states, thereby avoiding discrimination among fishermen;
- longlining should be regulated on the basis of the number of hooks rather than the length of the gear. On board there should be no more than 2 000 hooks for vessels catching bluefin tuna, 3 500 hooks for swordfish and 5 000 hooks for albacore;
- other technical changes dealt with the length of longline hooks for certain species, and the breadth of dredges.

In addition, certain deadlines were amended by Parliament:

- the Council should designate, before 31 December 2005 (rather than 2004), protected areas occurring, in particular, totally or partially beyond the territorial seas of Member States, including the types of fishing activities banned or authorised in such areas;

⁶⁷ Pavel Salz, Framian bv, Graeme Macfadyen, Poseidon Ltd., [Regional Dependency on Fisheries](#), European Parliament, 2007.

⁶⁸ T6-0234/2005, Official Journal: C 124, 25.05.2006, p. 0421-0527 E, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=236982.

⁶⁹ General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean.

⁷⁰ International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

- Member States should designate, before 31 December 2005 (rather than 2004), further protected areas within their territorial waters in which fishing activities might be banned or restricted.

Reference: COM(2003)589 of 9 October 2003

Rapporteur: Carmen Fraga Estevez (PPE-ED, ES)

6.3. Stock Recovery and Management Plans

The stock management/reconstitution plans are the most important element in the conservation of resources policy. Some examples follow.

In November 2007 the European Parliament adopted a report⁷¹ drafted by Iles Braghetto (EPP-ED, IT) on a proposal for a Council regulation establishing a **multi-annual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean**. It opposed the minimum size derogations for bluefin tuna.

The main amendments were as follows:

- at least one month before the list of vessels and traps were sent to the Commission, the Member States were to submit electronically to the Commission a fisheries plan indicating the licences for vessels and traps, accompanied by information concerning the expected fishing effort. The number of vessels, traps and fattening or farming capacity included in the fisheries plan were to be proportionate to the bluefin-tuna quota allocated;
- the number of vessels and traps on the list were to reflect the terms and conditions and the calculation of the fishing effort referred to in the fisheries plan provided for in the text;
- financial compensation from the European Fisheries Fund was to be paid to fishermen (both to crews and to ship owners) during the closed season;
- Parliament deleted the derogation for a minimum size for bluefin tuna of 8 kg;
- the Commission was to ensure that bluefin tuna fishery operations were immediately shut down in those Member States which did not meet the deadline for supplying the information referred to.

References: COM(2007) 169 of 3 March 2007

Rapporteur: Iles Braghetto (EPP-ED, IT)

In April 2005 the European Parliament adopted a resolution⁷² drafted by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PES, ES) on the **recovery plan for the Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks**. The principal amendments were as follows:

- the impact of the measures for the recovery of these stocks to be mitigated by socio-economic measures endowed with sufficient appropriations from the Community budget;
- the Gulf of Cadiz to be excluded from the plan;

⁷¹ T6-0532/2007, 15/11/2007, Official Journal: L 340 22.12.2007, p. 0008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5474682.

⁷² T6-0130/2005, Official Journal: C 033, 09.02.2006, p. 0495-0558 E, OEIL www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=239872.

- a better definition of safe biological limits and fishing mortality rate;
- greater flexibility in fishing effort reduction for Member States;
- an increase in the limits beyond which fish must be officially weighed.
- the Commission required to submit a report after two years to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of this recovery plan, including the associated socio-economic data.

References: COM(2003) 818 of 23 December 2003

Rapporteur: Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSE, ES)

In April 2005, the European Parliament adopted a report⁷³ drafted by Philippe Morillon (ALDE, FR) on the **recovery of the sole stocks in the Western Channel and the Bay of Biscay**.

The European Parliament completely amended the Commission proposal by specifying that the situation of sole stocks in the Western English Channel and the Bay of Biscay had stabilised in recent years. Consequently the recovery plan should be replaced by a management plan. The plan for management of sole was to be based on the state of the scientific assessment of biomass and not on fishing mortality as provided for in the Commission proposal. Consequently, the management plan should aim to maintain the sole stocks concerned within safe biological limits. The main amendments concentrated on TAC values, weight limits and the deletion of maximum fishing effort.

References: COM(2003) 818 of 23 December 2003

Rapporteur: Philippe Morillon (ALDE, FR)

In May 2005 Parliament adopted a resolution⁷⁴ drafted by Albert Jan Maat (EPP-ED, NL) on the **recovery plan of the stock of European eel**.

Among its amendments, the European Parliament sought to replace the Commission's idea of a 15-day fishing ban each month with an alternative measure to shorten the fishing season 'so that fishing effort is reduced by half'.

The report called for 'special measures to ensure an increase in the number of glass eels released' to combat the threat posed by large-scale exports of glass eels. It also specified that Member States should adopt 'extra measures to obstruct as little as possible the natural migration of glass eels during certain periods', and called for the EU to support 'measures to aid the construction and/or adaptation of barrier-crossing mechanisms to prevent migration along rivers from being compromised'. The EP also proposed a new clause aimed at providing additional protection for glass eels, imposing certain conditions on fishing for eels less than 12 cm long.

Currently, the EU is funding three research programs:

- Estimating the chance of recovery for the eel population (EELREP).

⁷³ T6-0128/2005, Official Journal C 033, 09.02.2006, p. 0495-0540 E, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=239882

⁷⁴ T6-0200/2006, 16/05/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5279452

- The impact of fisheries and hydroturbines on the European eel population (SILVEREEL).
- A study leading to informed management of eels (SLIME).

Reference: COM(2005)472 of 6 October 2005

Rapporteur: Albert Jan Maat (EPP-ED, NL)

In November 2006 the European Parliament adopted a resolution⁷⁵ drafted by Albert Jan Maat (EPP-ED, NL) on the **recovery plan for plaice and sole stocks in the North Sea**.

The main amendments were as follows:

- the total allowable catches (TAC) to be set for a 3-year period to replace the Commission's yearly definition;
- the PE also tabled a minimum precautionary tonnage to be the threshold for a management plan, instead of the percentage-based system proposed by the Commission;
- in line with the approach adopted for the cod recovery plan, the maximum number of days at sea to be decided for types of fishing.

In addition, Parliament stressed the need to reduce the potential negative consequences of the use of beam trawls on ecosystems and the marine environment. Accordingly, the Commission should carry out a study of the impact of beam-trawl fishing on ecosystems and of the alternative fishing methods sustainable in economic, ecological and social terms. On the basis of that study, an action plan should be drawn up for the gradual phasing-out of fishing methods and gear with negative impact on ecosystems and the marine environment in favour of lower-impact fishing methods and gear.

References: COM (2005)0714 of 10 January 2006

Rapporteur: Albert Jan Maat (EPP-ED, NL)

In May 2008 the European Parliament adopted a report⁷⁶ drafted by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PES, ES) on the **management of deep-sea fish stocks**. Previously, Policy Department B had organised a preparatory workshop on this issue, where four external studies were presented⁷⁷.

Parliament pointed out that, before new management measures are adopted, an analysis should be made to establish the reasons why existing measures were not applied and the reasons that led to the Member States failing to fulfil their obligations, or fulfilling them late or using different methodologies. It called on the Commission, the Member States and the fishing industry to fill in the gaps that existed so that effort-control measures could be adapted to each fishery, recognising that most deep-water fisheries are mixed fisheries.

The EP stressed to the Commission that the precautionary approach to, and the exploitation of, each species considered as a deep-water species must be observed and that TACs must

⁷⁵ T6-0383/2006, Official Journal, L 070 14.03.2008, p. 0024, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5304162.

⁷⁶ T6-0196/2008, 08/05/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484602.

⁷⁷ For the workshop documentation, see Antoine Dosdat, Pascal Lorange, Ifremer, France, Philip A. Large, CEFAS, Lowestoft, Matthew Gianni, IUCN, [Deep Sea Stocks Management](#), European Parliament, 2007.

be set accordingly, on the basis of precise scientific studies. It also emphasised the need for coordination within the various regional fisheries organisations (RFOs) in order that all restrictions should apply to fishermen from all contracting parties, thereby preventing unequal treatment.

Parliament mentioned the need to introduce a ban on discards in deep-water fisheries, which would enable scientists to study with more precision the complex diversity of species, many of them inedible, being landed. The Commission should vary the levels of fishing effort according to the species targeted and those caught merely by accident, whilst at the same time strengthening monitoring and control procedures.

The Commission was asked to:

- carry out a socio-economic assessment of deep-sea fisheries and an analysis of the impact of fishing effort reductions on the industry, as well as the impact of continued depletion of the fish stocks;
- introduce new programmes for the collection of scientific information;
- improve monitoring and control procedures in the Member States;
- ensure the implementation and possible improvement of existing international deep-sea fishing regulations.

References: COM (2007)0030 of 29 January 2007

Rapporteur: Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PES, ES)

6.4. Implementing sustainability in EU fisheries Through Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)

In September 2007 Parliament adopted an own-initiative report⁷⁸ drafted by Carmen Fraga Estevez (EPP-ED, ES) on the **implementation of maximum sustainable yield (MSY)**. The European Parliament felt that the Community system of conservation and management based on TACs and quotas had not led to the rational exploitation of stocks. The rigidity of the system and its dependence on political rather than biological guidelines had proved to be obstacles to rational management, making controls difficult and encouraging discards.

Parliament stressed the need for all future measures altering the current EU system of conservation and management to be taken with the full involvement of fishermen and to be based on scientific research. MEPs asked for a contribution by the 7th Framework Programme for Research to the development of theoretical fisheries' management models, their application, improved analysis of the state of stocks, natural effects and other inter-species relationships, and improved fishing gear.

Parliament noted the Commission's intention to achieve these objectives by making MSY the yardstick for fisheries management, but warned that, in the eyes of a large majority of scientists, the traditional MSY model had been superseded by new cutting-edge approaches which consider the ecosystem in its entirety and incorporate, *inter alia*, aspects relating to the environment and species interrelation, and economic and social factors. New methods had been developed, based on computer simulations of fisheries, which emulated the MSY

⁷⁸ T6-0382/2007, 06/09/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5386052 .

approach while not taking it as an explicit target, and took due account of uncertainties, environmental factors and possible interactions between species, which could, in principle, be extended to take account of specified social and economic factors.

Parliament cautioned that it would be difficult to apply the MSY model to multi-species fisheries, which constituted the majority in the EU. It therefore deplored the deficient analysis and inadequate solutions offered by the Commission's communication, as well as the absence of an in-depth evaluation of what applying an MSY model would actually mean, in terms of its shortcomings, the particularities of its application, and the potential risks of any errors in the model. It also regretted the lack of any analysis of the evolution of the MSY concept and the potential advantages of the different approaches. Accordingly, the time was not ripe to propose the introduction of an MSY system, and a deeper analysis was needed of the problems, with a view to deciding, with appropriate political courage, the most suitable measures for introducing the changes that were most needed to the current CFP.

Parliament was concerned that, in the context of the ambitious objective of changing the approach of the CFP conservation and management system, advantage was not being taken of the opportunity to provide a clear definition of the system of access to resources, and that the TAC/quota system and the fishing effort system continued to overlap. The Commission was encouraged to seize this opportunity to devise a system of access to resources that put the accent on sustainability, discouraging discards, simplifying technical measures, eliminating discrimination and excessive competition for stocks, introducing the necessary flexibility and boosting the sector's competitiveness. Any change to the management system must necessarily include financially acceptable compensation mechanisms, and this would require an assessment of the social and economic impact of the proposal.

The European Parliament called for the phasing-in of a system which would, ultimately, result in a fisheries policy that was ever more in line with the biological capacity of stocks so as to ensure the sustainability of the Community's fisheries. This would, ultimately, result in a stable system of access to resources in which TACs and quotas need only be modified in specific circumstances and using semi-automatic mechanisms, instead of being altered every year on grounds that were not purely scientific.

References: COM(2006) 360 4 July 2006

Rapporteur: Carmen Fraga Estevez (EPP-ED, ES)

6.5. A Policy to Reduce Unwanted By-catches and Eliminate Discards in European Fisheries

In January 2008 Parliament adopted a report⁷⁹ drafted by Carl Schlyter (Greens/EFA, SE) on a policy to reduce unwanted by-catches and eliminate discards in European fisheries.

The report highlighted the fact that unwanted by-catches and discards represented a serious environmental and economic problem, given that, on the one hand, they were responsible for the imbalance in certain ecosystems and that, on the other, they had been revealed to be the main cause of depleting stocks, some of which had a high commercial

⁷⁹ T6-0034/2008, 31/01/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484622 .

value, such as cod. Programmes to reduce discards must be fully integrated into the Community's overall policy for the sustainable management of fisheries.

Parliament outlines several possibilities:

- allowing more days at sea or otherwise increasing allowable fishing time for vessels using more selective gear;
- providing preferential access to areas that were closed to vessels not using selective gear;
- allowing vessels with more selective gear to fish during times when others not allowed.

Parliament stated that the industry would respond more favourably and with greater effect to a combination of positive and negative incentives. A discard ban should be adopted only after other types of negative incentives had been tried. The resolution said that the most sensible way to proceed was on pilot fisheries, selected by the quantity of discards produced or the conservation status of the species involved.

The resolution emphasised that if discard bans were adopted for specific fisheries, then in order to avoid perverse incentives such as creating a market for small fish or fish caught without quotas, such fish should not be marketed directly under any circumstances. The vessels could be compensated for the costs incurred in bringing to shore what they would have discarded. The fish involved could be used for fishmeal and fish-oil production with any company utilising this facility contributing to a regionally organised compensation fund.

Finally, Parliament pointed out that the TAC regulatory system was one of the major causes of discards and that measures must be adopted to prevent compulsory discards of unavoidably caught species of legal size owing to the lack of a quota for those species. By-catch quotas should be incorporated into TACs and all landed by-catch should be counted against quota allocations. Should a fishery exceed its by-catch quota it would risk closure, just as an excess of juveniles, it was suggested, should trigger real-time closures. This quota should then be gradually reduced to provide further incentives to improve gear selectivity.

References: COM(2007) 136 of 28 March 2007

Rapporteur: Carl Schlyter (Greens/EFA, SE)

6.6. Rights-Based Management Tools in Fisheries

The European Parliament adopted a report⁸⁰ on **rights-based management tools in fisheries** drafted by Elspeth Attwooll (ALDE, UK) in response to the Commission's Communication on this subject. Prior to adoption, Policy Department B held a workshop where four external studies on this issue were presented⁸¹.

In its report, Parliament recognised that there was a wide variety of such systems in place and that most employed some form of rights-based management (RBM). Experiments with management through fishing rights in Member States which had applied such systems had achieved very favourable results in many respects, for example in terms of capacity reduction. The resolution highlighted the degree of complexity involved and the difficulties

⁸⁰ T6-0113/2008, 10/04/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484612 .

⁸¹ Bjørn Hersoug, Luc van Hoof and Maud Evrard, Torbjorn Trondsen, Thórólfur Matthiasson, [Rights Based Management in Fisheries](#), European Parliament, 2007

this posed for movement toward a single system, whether achieved through harmonising the practices of Member States or by its administration at Community level, even if these difficulties were not insurmountable. Given that the system could prove highly positive for the management of certain Community fleets, consideration should at least be given to the possibility of including it in the CFP.

However Parliament considered it necessary to assess the impact that the application of rights-based access systems might have in relation to relative stability, the degree of concentration of ownership of rights and the resulting socioeconomic consequences, possible advantages to large companies at the expense of small-scale operators or community-based fisheries, the possible additional costs or the risk of an excessive concentration of rights. It emphasised that these concerns must be addressed prior to any move toward a single system, for example the possibility of setting, as precedents indicated, a limit on the accumulation of fishing rights.

MEPs called on the Commission to ensure that all studies on RBM which it initiated had the aim of:

- providing a full picture and analysis of the RBM systems currently in operation within the Member States;
- looking at the basic understandings involved in RBM in terms of: (a) to whom the rights might be allocated, to whom they might be transferred and whether they were tradable, together with any limitations in these respects, and (b) the extent of the rights;
- assessing, the effectiveness of the existing systems of management in achieving the objectives of the CFP in terms of:
 - improving the efficiency of the fishing industry and the livelihood of fishermen;
 - sustainable marine ecology;
 - viability of fisheries-dependent communities;
 - concentration of rights ownership and possible loss of employment;
 - examining these issues with reference to different types of fisheries both within and outside EU waters.

References: COM(2007)0073 of 26 February 2007

Rapporteur: Elspeth Attwooll (ALDE, UK)

6.7. Establishing a Community System to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

In February 2007, Parliament adopted a report⁸² drawn up by Marie-Hélène Aubert (Greens/EFA, FR) on the **implementation of the EU action plan against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing**.

The report called on the Commission and the Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the 15 actions included in the EU action plan on IUU fishing as agreed in 2002, and outlined a series of recommendations for action to be taken. In particular, it said that the Commission should include the following measures in its proposed regulation:

- a Community register of vessels engaging in IUU fishing should be set up, which would include vessels on regional fisheries management organisations' (RFMOs) black lists;

- common minimum penalties for serious infringements should be applicable in all Member States and should be sufficiently dissuasive;
- all black lists of fishing vessels and fish transport vessels, including their owners or operators, adopted by RFMOs should be published and incorporated directly into Community law. Non-EU vessels on those lists should be prohibited from entry into EU ports for any purpose, except in cases of *force majeure* or for humanitarian reasons. All EU-flagged vessels should be prohibited from providing support (fuel, supplies, transshipment, etc.) to those vessels while at sea;
- the legal origin of fish should be demonstrated before it was allowed to be offloaded in EU ports or imported into the EU.

The European Parliament welcomed the establishment of the new Fisheries Control Agency (in Vigo in Spain) and urged the Commission to consider the idea of setting up an EU coastguard. Moreover, it said that the Commission should ensure that any persons guilty of IUU fishing did not receive any type of aid or subsidy from Community funds for any branch of their activities.

References: Non-legislative report

Rapporteur: Marie-Hélène Aubert (Greens/EFA, FR)

In June 2008, the European Parliament subsequently adopted a non-binding report⁸³ on the proposal for a regulation establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The essential elements of the proposal were:

- the creation of a list of vessels (both EU-flagged and non-EU) involved in IUU fishing;
- a scheme of port state control that would prohibit access by third country IUU vessels;
- a ban on the importation of IUU fish, by requiring certification by the flag state that the fish was legal;
- the development of a Community Alert System when there was a suspicion that IUU fish has been detected;
- prohibition of importing fish from countries identified as not cooperating with the EU scheme;
- provisions detailing what actions were to be taken in each of the above situations.

Reference: COM(2007)0602 of 17 October 2007

Rapporteur: Marie-Hélène Aubert (Greens/EFA, FR)

⁸² T6-0044/2007, 15/02/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5386082 .

⁸³ T6-0245/2008, 29/09/2008, Official Journal: L 286 29.10.2008, p. 0001, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5548632 .

6.8. Launching a Debate on a Community Approach towards Eco-labelling Schemes for Fisheries Products

In September 2006 the European Parliament adopted an own-initiative report⁸⁴ 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**.

In the report MEPs regretted the Commission's delay in coming forward with its communication, which had allowed privately initiated eco-labels to proliferate without any form of control, creating confusion for producers and consumers. The report also deplored the 'lack of ambition' in a communication that did not properly address the issues.

Parliament called on the Commission to draw up a communication within six months, detailing the minimum requirements and guidelines with which a Community eco-labelling scheme for fisheries products must comply, taking into account international criteria, in particular those set out by the FAO, to ensure that any EU eco-labelling scheme was consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct and the resolutions adopted by other international organisations such as the UN and the WTO. The scheme should be promoted by the Commission, which should be responsible for establishing rules governing its operation and guaranteeing the independence of specialist accreditation and certification bodies, as well as the credibility of the claims made by the label.

References: COM(2005)0275 of 29 June 2005

Rapporteur: Carmen Fraga Estévez (EPP-ED, ES)

6.9. Protection of Marine Ecosystems in the High Seas from the Adverse Impacts of Bottom-Fishing Gears

On June 2008, the European Parliament adopted, a report⁸⁵ drafted by Duarte Freitas (EPP-ED, PT) on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom-fishing gears. A study on this subject had been requested from the Policy Department⁸⁶. The main amendments contained in the report were as follows.

Parliament deleted the prohibition of the use of bottom gears at depths beyond 1 000 m.

The Regulation had to take account of international guidelines on the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas adopted by the FAO.

Parliament amended the definitions of 'vulnerable marine ecosystem' and 'bottom gears'. Applications for a special fishing permit must be accompanied by a detailed fishing plan.

If there was substantial uncertainty about the presence of a vulnerable marine ecosystem, the area was to be designated as a vulnerable marine ecosystem until there was sufficient evidence to the contrary.

The Commission was to submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the implementation of the Regulation by 30 June 2009 (rather than 30 June 2010).

⁸⁴ T6-0347/2006, 07/09/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5281692 .

⁸⁵ T6-0246/2008, 15/07/2008, Official Journal: L 201 30.07.2008, p. 0008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5548842 .

⁸⁶ Jose Franco, AZTI TECNALIA, *Environmental Effects of Fishing Gears and the Socioeconomic Consequences of their Modification, Substitution or Suppression*, European Parliament, 2007.

Reference: COM(2007)0605 of 17 October 2007

Rapporteur: Duarte Freitas (EPP-ED, PT)

6.10. Submission by Member States of Statistics on Aquaculture

On January 2008 the European Parliament adopted a report⁸⁷ drafted by Philippe Morillon (ALDE, FR), under the **co-decision procedure**, on the **submission by Member States of statistics on aquaculture**. Parliament pointed out that the increasing importance of hatcheries and nurseries for aquaculture activity required detailed data for suitable monitoring and management of this sector within the CFP. The main amendments were as follows:

- the Regulation should allow for a transitional period of up to three years to be granted to Member States;
- adaptation of the definitions of 'aquaculture', 'capture-based aquaculture', and 'production' (including production from hatcheries and nurseries offered for sale);
- Member States 'shall' (not 'may') use surveys or other statistically validated methods covering at least 90% of the total, with an exception for Member States producing less than 1 000 tonnes instead of 500;
- Member States to identify the production by species, with the exception of species which did not exceed 500 tonnes and did not represent more than 5% in weight of the production by volume in a Member State;
- the data to cover: (1) the annual production (volume and unit value) of aquaculture; (2) the annual input (volume and unit value) to capture-based aquaculture; (3) the annual production of hatcheries and nurseries;
- Member States to submit the data to Eurostat within twelve months (rather than nine) from the end of the reference calendar year. The first reference year to be 2008 (instead of 2007);
- every three years the Commission was to submit an evaluation report to the European Parliament and the Council on the statistics compiled and their relevance and quality, undertake a cost-effectiveness analysis of the system introduced to collect and draw up the statistics and indicate best practices to lessen the workload for Member States and enhance the usefulness and quality of the data.

Reference: COM(2006)0864 of 22 December 2006

Rapporteur: Philippe Morillon (ALDE, FR)

⁸⁷ T6-0027/2008, 09/07/2008, Official Journal: L 218 13.08.2008, p. 0001, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5428882.

7. CULTURE, EDUCATION & TRAINING, MEDIA, LANGUAGES, YOUTH, SPORT AND COMMUNICATION

7.1. Culture

Parliament believes that European integration should be based on cultural values. It has always, therefore, been particularly interested in fostering European cooperation in the cultural sector. Parliament's initiatives in the cultural field cover areas as diverse as artists' rights, cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue.

7.1.1. Jobs and Growth Potential of the Cultural Sector

The European Parliament attaches great importance to cross-border mobility. In a 2006 resolution on the social security status of artists, Parliament stressed the need for a regulatory framework for mobile artists to cope with tax and social security problems. Before that the Committee on Culture and Education asked the Policy Department to carry out a study on the *Mobility of Artists and Social Security*, which identified a number of obstacles encountered by artists working in different countries in receiving unemployment benefits and retirement pensions⁸⁸.

At the EP's request, the Council agreed on a work plan for culture including the objective of improving regulatory conditions for mobile artists. Subsequently, Parliament supported a pilot project on 'Artist mobility', providing for EUR 1.5 million in the EU's annual budget for studies, joint actions and an exchange of best practice in terms of the legal framework for mobile artists.

In the process of codecision on the Culture programme, aiming, amongst other things, to promote the transnational mobility of cultural workers, the EP called for an increase in funding for the cultural sector.

A recent Parliament report on cultural industries called for a new task force on culture and the creative economy, a programme to support such industries, less VAT and a sharper focus on training and mobility. MEPs made concrete proposals to the Commission and Member States, including on innovative methods of funding for the cultural sector.

Reference: Decision No 1855/2006/EC of 12/12/2006⁸⁹

Rapporteurs: Claire Gibault (ALDE, FR) for *Social security status of artists*⁹⁰; Guy Bono (PSE, FR) for *Cultural industries*⁹¹.

7.1.2. Making Europe's Common Heritage Known

The European Parliament aims to foster knowledge of our common European heritage. The protection of this heritage is one of its concerns. Its resolution on the European 'Agenda for Culture' called on the Commission to propose specific programmes to preserve Europe's cultural heritage. Members also asked the Commission to do what was necessary to enforce and protect literary and artistic property rights, especially in the digital environment. The

⁸⁸ Susanne Capiou, Ericarts, *Mobility of Artists and Social Security*, European Parliament, 2006.

⁸⁹ Official Journal: L 372 27.12.2006, p. 0001-0011, www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5190192.

⁹⁰ T6-0236/2007, 07/06/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5398742

⁹¹ T6-0123/2008, 10/04/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5498632

Committee on Culture and Education had previously asked the Policy Department to carry out an independent opinion on the Commission's proposed Agenda⁹².

The protection of Europe's heritage was also the focus of a 2005 resolution on the collection and preservation of cinematographic heritage, and of a 2006 resolution on European cultural and architectural heritage at local level.

Promoting the common European heritage and fostering contemporary creation and cultural development is at the heart of a very successful initiative, the European Capital of Culture. Since its launch in 1985, the European Capital of Culture has been a genuine success. Each year, one European city is chosen to present itself and its history, heritage and culture by organising a series of cultural events.

In the context of enlargement, the selection procedure for the European Capital of Culture was reformed. New rules were set up, first to include cities from the new Member States, then to improve the selection process. In its resolution on the new procedure, the European Parliament laid down the composition of the selection panel and included provisions concerning acceding States. All the amendments proposed were accepted. According to the new rules, two capitals, one from the old, one from the new Member States, will be designated each year, starting from 2009.

Reference:

- COM(2007)0242, 10/05/2007

Rapporteur:

- Vasco Graça Moura (EPP-ED, PT) for *European Agenda for Culture*⁹³

Reference:

- COM(2004)0171, 16/03/2004

- Hegyi Gyula (PSE, HU) for Collection and preservation of cinematographic heritage⁹⁴

Reference:

- Decision No 649/2005/EC of 13/4/2005⁹⁵

Reference:

- INI/2006/2050

Rapporteur:

Nikolaos Sifunakis (PSE, EL) for European cultural and architectural heritage at local level⁹⁶

7.1.3. Intercultural Dialogue

Increasingly diverse societies and the process of globalisation bring people from different cultural backgrounds and views closer together. Peaceful coexistence is based on mutual understanding and respect for diverse perspectives. This can be fostered by an open and respectful exchange. Such an exchange is one of the main aims of intercultural dialogue.

⁹² Christopher Gordon, Rod Fisher, Dragan Klaić, *Analysis of the Commission Communication a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World*, European Parliament, 2007.

⁹³ T6-0124/2008, 10/04/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5532002

⁹⁴ Recommendation No 2005/865/EC of 11/12/2007, Official Journal: L 323 09.12.2005, p. 0057-0061, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=241852

⁹⁵ Official Journal: L 117 04.05.2005, p. 0020-0021, OEIL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=238362>

⁹⁶ T6-0355/2006, 07/09/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5319222

The European Parliament has made support for intercultural dialogue one of its priorities. It has been incorporated into Parliament's external relations policy. Furthermore, in the context of the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue 2008, Parliament organised and hosted a series of events, including, high-level meetings with religious leaders, debates and conferences, an Arab Week, an African Week and an intercultural film festival. Parliament requested studies on how education systems in the EU teach pupils to deal with the increased diversity of society⁹⁷ and on the reality of European Islam respectively⁹⁸. The latter study offers an alternative perspective to the one popularised by the media.

7.2. Education and Training

The main priorities of European cooperation in the field of education and training are to promote cross-border mobility of learners and teachers and to improve the quality of education and vocational training. In 2004-2009, the European Parliament took several initiatives with a view to achieving these goals, and made known its views on several issues under the codecision procedure.

7.2.1. Fostering Mobility and European Cooperation

In 2002, the widely known Erasmus programme reached the 'millionth Erasmus student' goal. By now over 1.5 million students have participated in the student exchange programme. 31 countries are currently participating in the programme, and nine out of every ten EU higher-education establishments are now involved. In 2006 MEPs succeeded in increasing the monthly Erasmus grant through negotiations with the Council. From 1 January 2007 the grant rose to €200 per month, an increase of €50 per month over the previous programme.

Erasmus is part of the new 'integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning' (2007-2013) that Parliament and Council agreed upon in 2006. The programme comprises four sub-programmes for school education, higher education, vocational education and training and adult education. The programme also promotes language learning, e-learning and the dissemination of project results. The programme's budget for the period 2007-2013 is EUR 6.97 billion. Another mobility programme is Erasmus Mundus, fostering mobility of higher-education students between third countries and the European Union.

The European Parliament jointly decides the legislation and budget of the education programmes. In its role as budgetary authority, it has been able to increase the budget for several Community programmes. The Committee on Culture and Education, which is responsible for these programmes, is also committed to making sure that their management and implementation procedures function efficiently and transparently.

Alongside the programmes, other initiatives aim at improving mobility, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), Europass, the European Quality Charter for Mobility and the recently adopted European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Its objective is

⁹⁷ Cristina Allemann-Ghionda, University of Cologne, [Intercultural Education in Schools](#), European Parliament, 2008.

⁹⁸ Felice Dassetto, Silvio Ferrari and Brigitte Maréchal, [Islam in the European Union: What's at Stake in the Future?](#), European Parliament, 2008.

to make job qualifications earned in any EU Member State comparable throughout the EU by using a common language to describe qualifications, and thus to facilitate mobility.

Reference:

- COM(2007)0395, 12/07/2007

Rapporteur:

- Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE, FR) for *Erasmus Mundus programme*⁹⁹

Reference:

- SEC(2005)0957, 08/07/2005

Rapporteur:

- Thomas Mann (EPP-ED, DE) for *European Qualifications Framework*¹⁰⁰

Other references:

- Decision No 1720/2006/EC of 15/11/2006¹⁰¹

- Decision No 2241/2004/EC of 15/12/2004¹⁰²

- Recommendation No 2006/961/EC of 18/12/2006¹⁰³

7.2.2. Education and Competitiveness

Parliament regards education as the best way of ensuring the EU's competitiveness. With a view of achieving the Lisbon objective of making Europe a competitive, knowledge-based economy, Parliament, in a 2005 resolution on education as the cornerstone of the Lisbon process, called on the Member States to increase investment in education, to frame more consistent national education policies, to promote scientific and technical studies and to develop an integrated strategy for lifelong learning which will support social inclusion.

The concern for high-quality education for people of all ages is also at the heart of the European Parliament's resolution on efficiency and equity in European education and training systems. In this text, MEPs emphasised the need to develop efficient and equitable policies for all stages of education, including early education. Prior to passing its resolution, the committee on Culture and Education asked the Policy Department to draw up a briefing note on how efficiency and equity could be guaranteed¹⁰⁴.

In another resolution, on adult learning, the European Parliament called on Member States to establish a lifelong learning culture focusing on adults, promoting the acquisition of knowledge and making it more attractive and accessible. Parliament also supported a regulation establishing a common framework for the systematic production of Community statistics in the field of education and lifelong learning.

Reference:

- COM(2006)048, 08/09/2006 (Efficiency and equity)

Rapporteur:

- Guy Bono (PSE, FR) for *Education as the cornerstone of the Lisbon process*¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ T6-0497/2008, 21/10/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5510232

¹⁰⁰ T6-0368/2006, 26/9/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5303142

¹⁰¹ Official Journal: L 327 24.11.2006, p. 0045-0068, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5190202

¹⁰² Official Journal: L 390 31.12.2004, p. 0006-0020, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=239612

¹⁰³ Official Journal: L 394 30.12.2006, p. 0005, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5274982

¹⁰⁴ Prof. Marc Demeuse, Ariane Baye, Deloitte, *Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems*, European Parliament, 2007.

¹⁰⁵ T6-0384/2005, 18/01/2005, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5221062

Reference:

- COM(2006)0614, 23/10/2006 (Adult learning)

Rapporteur:

- Doris Pack (EPP-ED, DE) for *Adult learning: it is never too late to learn*¹⁰⁶.

Reference:

- COM(2006)0481, 08/09/2006

Rapporteur:

- Tomáš Zatloukal (EPP-ED, CZ) for *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*¹⁰⁷;

Reference:

- Regulation No 452/2008 of 23/4/2008¹⁰⁸

7.3. Media

7.3.1. Reform of European Television Rules

It was the European Parliament that first identified the need to modernise the existing regulation for the European audiovisual sector. New developments in the audiovisual sector, especially the convergence in services and technology (the fact that a TV channel can be viewed on a computer via the internet) and the growth in non-linear services (e.g. video on demand or mobile and digital TV) called for a modernisation of the 'Television without Frontiers' directive. The new directive on Audiovisual Media Services now also covers new media services such as Web TV and on-demand services.

Throughout the lengthy negotiation process with the Council, Parliament played a major role in:

- Increasing, or at least maintaining, qualitative and quantitative restrictions on advertising (e.g. the upper limit for commercials continues to be 12 minutes an hour) and providing legal recognition for product placement accompanied by safeguards (it will be prohibited in children's programmes, for example).
- Promoting full access to audiovisual media services for people with disabilities.
- Effectively improving protection of minors through the development of codes of conduct (e.g. regarding advertising for 'unhealthy' food during children's programmes) or preventing them from accessing adult content in on-demand audiovisual media services.

MEPs had already called for action to protect children from inappropriate content on the internet in a report on the protection of minors and human dignity and right of reply, adopted in 2006.

References:

- Directive 2007/65/EC of 11/12/2007¹⁰⁹;

¹⁰⁶ T6-0013/2008, 16/01/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484642

¹⁰⁷ T6-0417/2007, 27/9/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5484632

¹⁰⁸ Official Journal: L 145 04.06.2008, p. 0227, OEIL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5295862>

- Recommendation 2006/952/EC of 20/12/2006¹¹⁰.

7.3.2. Safeguarding the Diversity of European Media

The European Parliament believes that a pluralistic media system is essential for a democratic Europe. In a resolution on media pluralism, adopted in September 2008, Members urged the Commission and the Member States to safeguard media pluralism, to ensure that all EU citizens can access free and diversified media in all Member States and to recommend improvements when needed.

In the same spirit, in a report also adopted in September 2008, Parliament called for greater recognition of 'community media', that is to say media outlets mainly run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis. These are normally managed by local communities and could also play a role in making the EU's work better known. MEPs had earlier asked the Policy Department to carry out a study on the situation of this *highly specific media sector in the EU*¹¹¹.

Reference:

- SEC(2007)0032, 16/01/2007

Rapporteur:

- Marianne Mikko (PSE, ET) for *Media concentration and pluralism in the EU*¹¹²

Reference:

- INI/2008/2011

Rapporteur:

- Karin Resetarits (ALDE, AT) for *Community media in Europe*¹¹³

7.3.3. Fostering European Cinema

In 2006 the European Parliament and the Council reached agreement on the 'MEDIA 2007' programme. This programme facilitates filmmakers' access to funding and helps to increase the circulation of European audiovisual works all over the world. It is providing EUR 755 million to Europe's film industry from 2007-2013.

The big success of the Media programme was evident at this year's Cannes Film Festival. Amongst the films receiving honours at the awards ceremony were four films funded by the EU's Media Programme: *Entre Les Murs* (Laurent Cantet, Palme d'Or), *Gomorra* (Matteo Garrone, Grand Prize), *Le silence de Lorna* (Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, prize for the best scenario), and *Tulpan* (Sergey Dvortsevov, Prix *Un Certain Regard*). The four films were part of a total of no less than 14 MEDIA-funded films selected for screening during the Festival. MEDIA-supported films have already triumphed at the Oscars this year, with the golden guys for *The Counterfeiters* (Stefan Ruzowitzky) and for *La vie en Rose* (Olivier Dahan).

In order to extend the success of the MEDIA programme beyond the borders of the European Union, Parliament supported a preparatory action with a view to a new

¹⁰⁹ Official Journal: L 332 18.12.2007, p. 0027, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5301252

¹¹⁰ Official Journal: L 378 27.12.2006, p. 0072, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=243292

¹¹¹ Kern European Affairs (KEA), *The State of Community Media in the European Union*, European Parliament, 2007.

¹¹² T6-0459/2008, 25/09/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5564652

¹¹³ T6-0456/2008, 25/09/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5581672

programme, MEDIA MUNDUS, by providing for EUR 2 million in the EU's annual budget to enhance cooperation between the EU film industry and its partners around the world.

In 2007 the European Parliament set up a film prize called LUX. The annual award rewards a film that addresses current social issues or that highlights European culture. The prize consists in provision of 23 subtitled copies of the prize-winning film in all Community languages and a version for people with impaired hearing. The first winner was German-Turkish director Fatih Akin with his movie 'The Edge of Heaven' (*Auf der anderen Seite*). In 2008 Members awarded the prize to the film *Le silence de Lorna* by the Dardenne brothers.

Reference:

- Decision No 1718/2006/EC of 15/11/2006¹¹⁴

7.4. Languages

7.4.1. Fostering Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity

As stated in a 2006 resolution, Parliament fully subscribes to the main aims of the EU Framework Strategy on Multilingualism. These are: to encourage language learning and promote linguistic diversity, to promote a multilingual economy and to give citizens easier access to information on the EU in their own language.

Parliament feels that it is essential for every citizen to have a practical grasp of at least two languages other than his or her own. Therefore, in a 2005 resolution, it welcomed the establishment of an Indicator of Language Competence, an instrument to assess linguistic proficiency. In a 2006 own-initiative report on the European dimension of school teaching materials, it was further stressed that Member States should include at least two foreign languages from a very early age in their school programmes. In 2008, the Committee on Culture and Education asked the Policy Department to carry out a study evaluating the results of the *EU's Multilingualism Action Plan and of the Council of Europe's efforts to protect minority and regional languages*¹¹⁵.

Reference:

- COM(2005)0596, 22/11/2005

Rapporteur:

- Bernat Joan I Marí (ALDE, ES) for the resolution on Multilingualism¹¹⁶

Reference:

- COM(2005)0356, 01/08/2005

Rapporteur:

- Manolis Mavrommatis (EPP-ED, EL) for *Indicator of language competence*¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Official Journal: L 327 24.11.2006, p. 0012, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5189552

¹¹⁵ Joe Cullen, Clare Cullen, Véronique Maes, Gigliola Paviotti, Menon Network EEIG, *Multilingualism: between Policy Objectives and Implementation*, European Parliament, 2008.

¹¹⁶ T6-0488/2006, 15/11/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5329122

¹¹⁷ T6-0184/2006, 27/04/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5288422

Reference:

- INI/2006/2041

Rapporteur:

- Christopher Beazley (EPP-ED, UK) for *Initiatives to complement national school curricula*¹¹⁸.

7.4.2. The European Parliament Embodies Multilingualism

The European Parliament believes that using the different languages spoken by its citizens in the European Institutions is a major factor in ensuring transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness. Every EU citizen has the right to present requests or petitions in an official language to the European Parliament, and to receive a reply in that language. In addition, each Member of the European Parliament has the right to speak in and to hear the official language of their choice.

With the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the number of official languages of the EU institutions more than doubled to 23. This posed an enormous challenge in terms of the management and organisation of the interpretation and translation services. In its efforts to safeguard the use of all official languages in practice in parliamentary proceedings, the European Parliament is the very embodiment of linguistic diversity in the EU. This EP commitment to multilingualism is unique in the world.

7.5. Youth

The European Parliament has always supported close cooperation between the Member States in the field of youth. For example, Parliament led the way in setting up the European Voluntary Service and in the promotion of exchanges between young people. In 2004-2009, several actions were taken to support young Europeans.

7.5.1. The European Parliament Supports Active Young People

Members agreed with the Council on the new 'Youth in Action' programme for 2007-2013. In the course of the negotiations Parliament called for a significant increase in the budget allocated and simplified access to these actions. Parliament also stressed that access to the programme should be facilitated and that young people with disabilities must be included on equal terms, in order to prevent discrimination. And Parliament succeeded in including European Youth Week, a successful event taking place for the fourth time in 2008, in the actions funded by this programme. The 'Youth in Action' Programme promotes young people's active and European citizenship and aims at developing solidarity, tolerance, and mutual understanding among young people from different countries and of different origins.

In April 2008 the organisers of the Charlemagne Prize and the European Parliament jointly created a new European Charlemagne Youth Prize, which recognises contributions by young people towards the process of European integration. The prize provides funding of EUR 2 000 to 5 000 for existing projects that foster a shared sense of European identity and cooperation. The first Charlemagne Youth Prize was awarded to a Hungarian youth project called 'Students without Boundaries' on the evening of 29 April in Aachen: every year more

¹¹⁸ T6-0361/2006, 26/09/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5313042

than one hundred students from Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and other countries gather for leadership workshops on European issues. The second and third prizes went to the United Kingdom and Greece respectively.

Reference:

- Decision No 1717/2006/EC of 15/11/2006¹¹⁹

7.6. Sport

7.6.1. Towards an EU Sport Policy: MEPs Concerned about TV Rights, Player Training, Doping and Racism

Stricter rules on doping, no quotas for football players from specific countries and a fair distribution of lottery profits were among the European Parliament's proposals in a report on the Commission White Paper on sport, adopted by a large majority in May 2008. The report called on the Commission to come up with clearer guidelines on how to apply EU rules in the area of sport. Parliament also voiced concern about the possible deregulation of gambling markets. In a report on professional football adopted in 2007 MEPs had already stated that professional football in the EU needed better governing rules in many areas, from managing clubs' finances to recruiting young talent, and had called on the European Commission to propose solutions.

The European Parliament is also aware of the social and educational aspects of sport. In 2007 MEPs adopted a resolution on the role of sport in education. Physical education should be compulsory in school, they said, and children should have at least three physical education lessons a week, in order to fight obesity and to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Parliament prepared the ground for its report by requesting a study identifying major trends in the *role of physical education in the Member States*¹²⁰.

In 2006 Members also adopted a written declaration strongly condemning all forms of racism at football matches. Parliament calls on UEFA and all other competition organisers in Europe to ensure that referees had the option, according to clear and strict guidelines, to stop or abandon matches in the event of serious racist abuse.

Parliament has also actively supported the introduction of a preparatory action in the field of sport in the 2009 budget. Its objective is to prepare for future EU initiatives in the field of sport, on the basis of the priorities set out in the White Paper.

Reference:

- COM(2007)0391, 11/07/2007

Rapporteur:

- Manolis Mavrommatis (EPP-ED, EL) for the resolution on *White Paper on Sport*¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Official Journal: L 327 24.11.2006, p. 0030-0044, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5190212

¹²⁰ Professor Ken Hardman, University of Worcester, *Current Situation and Prospects for Physical Education in the European Union*, European Parliament, 2007.

¹²¹ T6-0198/2008, 08/05/2008, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5565022

Reference:

- COM(2005)0680, 22/12/2005

Rapporteur:

- Pál Schmitt (EPP-ED, HU) for *Role of sport in education*¹²²

Reference:

- INI/2006/2130

Rapporteur:

- Ivo Belet (EPP-ED, BE) for *Future of Professional football*¹²³

Reference:

- Written Declaration on tackling racism in football¹²⁴

7.7. Europe and its Citizens

7.7.1. Communicating Europe to its Citizens and Fostering Active Citizenship

As the representative of the interests of Europe's citizens, the European Parliament attaches great importance to bringing the European Union's activities to the awareness of its citizens. In its resolutions on the EU'S communication strategy, Parliament has repeatedly made detailed proposals for improving the relationship between the EU and its citizens, and has critically examined the Commission initiatives. The EP advocates, *inter alia*, developing a common communication strategy for all the EU institutions, reviewing communication methods, communicating European issues at a decentralised - that is national, regional or local - level, as well as stronger involvement and cross-border cooperation on the part of national, regional and local media.

In 2006, Parliament and the Council agreed on the Europe for Citizens programme. Its aim is to encourage cooperation between citizens and their organisations from different countries. Well-known initiatives, such as town-twinning, are funded by this programme.

References:

- COM(2006)0035, 01/02/2006 and COM(2004)0196, 20/04/2004

Rapporteur:

- Luis Herrero-Tejedor (EPP-ED, ES) for *European communication policy with citizens and the report entitled Implementing the information and communication strategy for the EU*¹²⁵

Reference:

- Decision No 1903/2006/EC of 12/12/2006¹²⁶.

¹²² T6-0503/2007, 13/11/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5478932

¹²³ T6-0100/2007, 29/03/2007, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5353822

¹²⁴ T6-0080/2006, 14/03/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5323832

¹²⁵ T6-0500/2006, 16/11/2006, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5329222;

T6-0183/2005, 12/05/2005, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5214472

¹²⁶ Official Journal: L 378 27.12.2006, p. 0032, OEIL: www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5243942

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