

Small-scale and artisanal fisheries and CFP reform

European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy (2011/2292(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the reform of the common fisheries policy (CFP),
- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 43(2) and 349 thereof,
- having regard to Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on measures taking account of the special characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions,
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper entitled ‘Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2009)0163),
- whereas the future EMFF should guarantee the right of local populations to fish, for family consumption, in accordance with specific customs and to maintain their traditional economic activities,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the common fisheries policy,¹
- having regard to the regulation applicable to the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), namely Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006² laying down the detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries sector,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2005 on ‘women’s networks: fishing, farming and diversification’,³
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2006 on inshore fishing and the problems encountered by inshore fishermen,⁴
- having regard to its resolution of 2 September 2008 on fisheries and aquaculture in the context of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe,⁵
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2012 on the contribution of the common

¹ OJ L 358, 31.12.2002, p. 59.

² OJ L 223, 15.8.2006, p. 1.

³ OJ C 286 E, 23.11.2006, p. 519.

⁴ OJ C 300 E, 9.12.2006, p. 504.

⁵ OJ C 295 E, 4.12.2009, p. 1.

fisheries policy to the production of public goods¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2010 on the Green Paper on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy,²
 - having regard to the new proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy (COM(2011)0425),
 - having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 and Council Regulation (EC) No 861/2006 and Council Regulation No XXX/2011 on integrated maritime policy (COM(2011)0804),
 - having regard to the new proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (COM(2011)0416),
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2011)0417),
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (COM(2011)0424),
 - having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on reporting obligations under Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy (COM(2011)0418),
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinions of the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0291/2012),
- A. whereas small-scale fishing – comprising artisanal fishing and some types of coastal/inshore fishing, shellfishing and other traditional extensive aquaculture activities such as the natural breeding of molluscs in inshore waters – has a very diverse territorial, social and cultural impact in mainland and island areas and in the outermost regions, and has specific problems that set it apart from large-scale fishing and from intensive or industrial aquaculture;
- B. whereas, for the purposes of the new Fisheries Policy Regulation, it is necessary to define what should be understood as artisanal fishing, and to take account of the repercussions that this type of fishing will have for funding under the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund;
- C. whereas the artisanal or coastal fleet is vital for maintaining and creating employment in

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0052.

² OJ C 348 E, 21.12.2010, p. 15.

coastal regions and helps ensure the EU's self-sufficiency in terms of food, as well as the development of coastal areas and the supply of fishery products to the European market;

- D. whereas some 80% of fishing in the Community is carried out by vessels under 15 metres, making this fleet segment the leading player in the CFP; whereas the CFP must provide an adequate, sufficient and necessary response to the problems which, despite the successive measures made available to the Member States, continue to be faced by a large part of the small-scale fishing sector;
- E. whereas the coastal and artisanal fishing sector has ageing vessels that should be made safer and modernised, or even replaced with new vessels that are more energy efficient and are compliant with safety standards;
- F. whereas there is a scarcity of statistical data and indicators at European level in terms of social, economic and territorial cohesion, and it is necessary to promote indicators that provide socio-economic, scientific and environmental data which reflect the geographical, environmental and socio-economic diversity of this type of fishing;
- G. whereas the absence of reliable scientific data remains a serious problem in terms of seeking to achieve sustainable management of most fish stocks;
- H. whereas in defining a fisheries policy, in addition to essential environmental objectives relating to the conservation of fisheries resources, social and economic objectives must also be considered, as they have been neglected, particularly in the case of small-scale fishing;
- I. whereas the current centralised management of the CFP frequently produces guidelines that are divorced from reality, poorly understood by the sector (which is not involved in discussing or developing them), and difficult to implement, producing results that are often the opposite of those intended;
- J. whereas management models based on transferable fishing rights cannot be considered as measures for tackling overfishing and overcapacity;
- K. whereas a compulsory reduction in the fleet achieved exclusively through market instruments, such as transferable fishing concessions (TFC), could lead to the prevalence of operators that are more competitive from a purely economic point of view, to the detriment of the operators and sectors of the fleet that have a lower environmental impact and create more (direct and indirect) employment;
- L. whereas the economic and social crisis is particularly affecting the fisheries sector, and in this context small-scale fishing may be more vulnerable owing to its low capitalisation; whereas it is important to ensure the economic and social stability of small-scale fishing communities;
- M. whereas its structural weaknesses mean that small-scale coastal or artisanal fishing is exposed to certain types of economic shock (such as rapidly rising fuel prices or lack of access to credit) and to rapid changes in the availability of resources;
- N. whereas the specific characteristics of small-scale fishing constitute an aspect that must be taken into account in the future CFP, but at the same time must not be the sole focus of the social dimension of the reform, given the severe crisis currently affecting the entire sector;

- O. whereas first-sale fish prices are not keeping pace with the current significant rise in production costs, particularly for fuel, and in many cases are either stagnant or falling, thus adding to the crisis facing the sector;
 - P. whereas the market does not fully remunerate the positive social and environmental externalities associated with small-scale fishing; whereas society as a whole does not recognise or remunerate the activities associated with fishing which constitute the sector's multifunctional aspect and produce public goods by, inter alia, stimulating the coastline, gastronomy, museology and recreational angling, to the benefit of society as a whole;
 - Q. whereas the future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) should fully take into account the specific problems and needs of artisanal and small-scale fishing, both in coastal and inland areas, as well as the consequences for both men and women of the implementation of the measures included in the future reform;
 - R. whereas the specific diseases that affect women working in the artisanal fishing sector are not recognised as occupational diseases;
 - S. whereas creating exclusion zones contributes to the development of responsible practices, to the sustainability of both coastal marine ecosystems and traditional fishing activities, and to the survival of fishing communities;
 - T. whereas small-scale coastal fishing and artisanal fishing have very different characteristics which vary from country to country and coast to coast;
 - U. whereas the importance of small-scale fisheries for the protection of minority languages in isolated, coastal areas cannot be ignored;
 - V. whereas the level of association and organisation of small-scale fishing professionals is insufficient and unequal in the various Member States;
 - W. whereas Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union refers to the need to promote policies specific to the outermost regions, particularly in the fisheries sector;
1. Considers that small-scale fishing comprises artisanal fishing and some types of coastal/inshore fishing, shellfishing and other traditional extensive aquaculture activities such as the natural breeding of molluscs in inshore waters;
 2. Stresses that small-scale fishing, by reason of its characteristics and its weight within the sector, has a pivotal role to play in achieving what should be the fundamental objectives of any fisheries policy: ensuring fish supplies to the public and the development of coastal communities, and promoting employment and improved living standards for fishing professionals, within a context of ensuring that resources are sustainable and are properly conserved;
 3. Considers that the specific characteristics of the small-scale fishing segment should not under any circumstances be used as an excuse to exclude this segment from the general framework of the CFP, although that policy should be sufficiently flexible to enable management systems to be adapted to the specific characteristics and problems of artisanal fishing;

4. Points out that the specific characteristics of small-scale fishing vary greatly from one Member State to another, and that opting for the lowest common denominator has rarely proved a constructive approach to European decision-making;
5. Believes that the starting-point should be a generic definition of artisanal fishing that prevents the widely varying circumstances to be found in the fisheries sector, depending on fishing grounds, type of stocks fished and any other features specific to a given local area, from resulting in non-fulfilment of the objectives of simplification, legislative clarity and non-discrimination; also believes that the CFP should include measures allowing a degree of flexibility in scientifically proven cases in which fishing would not be possible without certain adjustments being made to the general rules;
6. Draws attention to the need to take due account of the existing scientific studies on small-scale fishing; notes that some of those studies present proposals for a definition of 'small-scale fishing', as in the case of the PRESPO project for sustainable development of artisanal fisheries in the Atlantic area, which proposes an approach based on numerical descriptors for the definition and segmentation of European artisanal fishing fleets;
7. Considers that the definition of small-scale fishing should take account of a range of national and regional characteristics and differences in terms of governance, including, inter alia, respect for an artisanal tradition rooted in the area, with family involvement in both the ownership and activities of fisheries undertakings; stresses that it is important to formulate definition criteria that are flexible and/or can be combined and adapted in a balanced way to the diversity of small-scale fishing existing in the EU;

Local management

8. Considers that the over-centralised model of fisheries management that has characterised the CFP over the last 30 years has been a failure, and that the current reform must bring about meaningful decentralisation; believes the reform of the CFP must create conditions that allow for local, regional and national specificities; stresses that local management, backed up by scientific knowledge and consultation and participation of the sector in defining, implementing, co-managing and evaluating policy, is the management type that best meets fishing needs and provides the greatest incentives for preventive behaviour among fishermen;
9. Considers that Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), in the new context of a decentralised and regionalised CFP, should play a much greater role in the future Common Fisheries Policy;
10. Considers it vital to strengthen the role of the advisory committees and to consider collaboration and co-management of resources, thus making it possible to preserve the nature of these committees, with their value enhanced so that they become a management forum, without decision-making powers but in which stakeholders from the sector and NGOs would participate, thereby permitting the addressing of horizontal questions concerning the specific issue of artisanal fishing;
11. Considers that the imposition of a single model for all the Member States, such as transferable fishing concessions (TFCs), does not constitute an appropriate solution, in view of the huge diversity that characterises fishing in the EU;

12. Considers it advantageous to have different models of fisheries management available to Member States and/or regions under a voluntary system, where they are free to choose for themselves within the framework of a regionalised CFP;
13. Strongly rejects the mandatory implementation of TFCs for any type of fleet; believes that the decision as to whether or not to adopt TFCs and which sectors of the fleet to include in this scheme should be left to the Member States in agreement with the competent regions, taking account of the diversity of situations and the opinions of stakeholders; believes it is already possible for Member States to establish a system of transferable fishing concessions in their national legislation;
14. Draws attention to the fact that the TFC system cannot be seen as an infallible measure for resolving problems of overfishing and excess capacity; stresses that a regulatory approach that can make the required adjustments to fishing capacity is always a possible alternative to a market approach;
15. Considers that, once the general management objectives have been set out, the Member States and the competent regions should be given flexibility to decide on the management rules best suited to achieving these objectives within the framework of regionalisation, specifically as regards the right of access to fisheries resources and taking account of the specific characteristics of their fleets, fisheries and resources;
16. Notes the importance of ensuring that all relevant interested parties are involved in the development of policies concerning small-scale coastal fishing and artisanal fishing;
17. Draws attention to the importance of taking into account not only the quantity of the fleet but also its cumulative impact on resources and the selectivity and sustainability of its fishing methods; considers that the future CFP should encourage the increased sustainability of the fleet in environmental, economic and social terms (state of repair and safety, habitability, working conditions, energy efficiency, fish storage, etc), by promoting the progressive prevalence of sectors and operators that use selective fishing techniques and fishing gear with less impact on resources and the marine environment, and that benefit the communities of which they are part in terms of generating jobs and of the quality of those jobs; defends a sustainable balance between protecting existing fisheries resources in maritime areas and protecting the local socio-economic fabric that depends on fishing and shellfishing;

Characteristics of the fleet

18. Rejects a general and indiscriminate reduction in the capacity of the fleet and emphasises that, where necessary it cannot be adjusted solely and obligatorily on the basis of market criteria; considers that such adjustments must be based on an ecosystemic approach, in which the specific decisions relating to managing the small-scale fleet are taken at regional level, respecting the subsidiarity principle, ensuring a tailored fishing regime that gives priority of access to resources and protects the small-scale fleets, and ensuring that communities are involved; calls for a study of the state of the fleet capacity in the EU to be carried out as a matter of urgency;
19. Rejects any general reduction in the capacity of a given fleet solely and obligatorily on the basis of market criteria and imposed by a potential and unwanted enforcement of transferable fishing concessions;

20. Highlights the importance of further research in the field of social, economic and territorial cohesion; points to the need for statistics and indicators at European level that would provide reliable and sufficiently pertinent socio-economic, scientific and environmental data, including broad assessment of fish stocks and catches in both professional and recreational fishing, and calls for the provision of sufficient resources to achieve this; believes such data should also reflect the full range of geographical, cultural and regional differences;
21. Urges the Commission to conduct an assessment of EU fleet capacity so as to enable the most appropriate decisions to be taken;
22. Calls on the Commission to monitor and adjust fleet capacity ceilings for Member States so that they are in line with reliable data and technical advances are taken into account;
23. Points out that the management of small-scale fishing is made more demanding and challenging by the large number of vessels involved and the wide variations in techniques and fisheries; stresses that the availability of information is crucial for effective management, and that more and better information on small-scale fishing is needed;
24. Urges the Commission to work with the Member States, the RACs and stakeholders to improve the characterisation of small-scale fishing and to map its distribution in the EU for the purposes of fisheries management; urges the Commission, in particular and in conjunction with the Member States, to conduct an exhaustive and rigorous study of the size, characteristics and distribution of the different small-scale fishing sectors, analysing as rigorously as possible where, when and how they fish, in order to identify fleet segments in which there is overcapacity and the causes thereof;
25. Points out that currently the Community cofinances no more than 50% of the budget for gathering, processing and distributing biological data, which is used to support knowledge-based management; calls, accordingly, for the Community to increase its efforts in this area by raising the maximum permissible level for cofinancing;
26. Warns of the need to deepen understanding of the current position of recreational fishing and its development, including its economic, social and environmental impact; draws attention to situations in which recreational fishing goes beyond its scope and competes illegitimately with professional fishing in the catching and marketing of fish, causing a reduction in market quotas at local and regional level and lowering first-sale prices;

Supporting measures

27. Recognises that the new EMFF has been designed to enable the coastal and artisanal fleet sectors in particular to obtain funding; recognises that, on the basis of the general framework facilitated by the EMFF, the Member States have to set their funding priorities in such a way as to respond to the specific problems of this sector and support the local and sustainable management of the fisheries concerned;
28. Advocates the need to maintain a fund that retains the principal of greater support for cofinanced activities in the outermost regions, as well as preserving the specific compensation instruments for the extra costs associated with fisheries activity and the distribution of fisheries products, considering the structural limitations that affect the fisheries sector in these regions;

29. Emphasises that, given the precarious situation and decline of some coastal communities that depend on fishing, as well as the lack of alternatives for economic diversification, the existing instruments, funds and mechanisms should be reinforced in order to ensure cohesion in terms of employment and ecological sustainability; believes there should be specific acknowledgment of this in the new CFP and MFF framework; also emphasises the need to focus on greater co-management and involvement of the artisanal fishing sector in decision-making, by promoting local and regional strategies and crossborder cooperation in this field, encompassing development, research and training projects and with the appropriate EMFF, ESF and ERDF funding;
30. Calls on the Member States to take account of the importance of the economic, social and cultural roles of women in the fishing industry, so that women can have access to social benefits; emphasises that the active participation of women in fishing-related activities helps firstly to preserve specific cultural traditions and practices, and secondly to ensure the survival of their communities, thereby safeguarding the cultural diversity of the regions concerned;
31. Considers that the rules on implementing the future EMFF should make it possible to finance actions, inter alia in the following areas:
- improving safety, living conditions and on-board working conditions, improving catch preservation, and making vessels more economically and environmentally sustainable (selection of techniques, energy efficiency, etc) while not increasing their fishing capacity;
 - investment in more sustainable fishing gear;
 - promotion of young people's increased involvement in the sector's activities and keeping them involved, through a special incentive scheme in response to the employment and sustainability challenges the sector is facing, as well as through start-up packages aimed at securing the entry of a new generation of fishermen into small-scale fisheries;
 - construction of specialised fishing ports and specific facilities for the landing, storage and sale of fishery products;
 - support for associations, organisations and cooperatives of the sector's professionals;
 - promotion of quality policies;
 - promotion of the cohesion of the economic and social fabric of the coastal communities most dependant on small-scale fishing, with a particular focus on the outermost regions, in order to stimulate those coastal regions' development;
 - support for sustainable shellfishing practices, inter alia by offering assistance to those carrying out this activity, many of them women, who suffer from work-related diseases;
 - support for the promotion and marketing of artisanal fishery and extensive aquaculture products, through the creation of a European label to distinguish and identify European artisanal fishery and shellfish products, provided they comply with good sustainability practices and the principles of the Common Fisheries Policy;

- support for education and marketing campaigns to make consumers and young people aware of the value of consuming fish from small-scale fisheries, including the positive effects on the local economy and the environment;
 - allocation of financing under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in such a way as to make the fisheries sector more women-friendly by redesigning the sector and providing suitable facilities (such as changing-rooms on boats or in ports);
 - support for associations of women such as net-makers, port workers and packers;
 - vocational training, including training for women working in the fisheries sector, aimed at improving their access to managerial and technical jobs related to fishing;
 - enhancing women's role in fishing, in particular by granting support for activities carried out on land, for related professionals and for activities associated with fishing, both upstream and downstream;
32. Stresses that access to funds from the future EMFF should favour projects offering integrated solutions that benefit coastal communities as a whole, rather than those that benefit only a small number of operators; considers that access to EMFF funds should be guaranteed for fishermen and their families and not just for shipowners;
 33. Stresses that the common organisation of the market (COM) in fishery and aquaculture products should contribute to enabling a greater output of small-scale fishing, market stability, improved marketing of fisheries products and an increase in their value added; expresses concern at the possibility of abolition of the still-existing public market regulation instruments, public regulatory bodies and supports for storage on land, and calls for an ambitious reform that enhances the COM's instruments for achieving its goals;
 34. Proposes the creation of a European label rewarding small-scale fishery products obtained in accordance with the principles of the CFP, in order to encourage best practice;
 35. Advocates the creation of mechanisms that ensure recognition of the so-called externalities generated by small-scale fishing that are not remunerated by the market, in terms of both the environment and the economic and social cohesion of coastal communities;
 36. Considers it important to promote a fair and adequate distribution of value added along the sector's value chain;
 37. Calls for strict monitoring and certification of fisheries products imported from third countries to ensure that they originate from sustainable fisheries and that they meet the same requirements that Community producers have to comply with (e.g. with regard to labelling, traceability, phytosanitary regulations and minimum sizes);
 38. Advocates the creation (within the framework of the EMFF or of other instruments) of specific and temporary support mechanisms to be implemented in emergencies such as natural or man-made disasters (oil slicks, water pollution, etc), fishing stoppages imposed by plans for restoring stocks or restructuring, or sudden short-term increases in fuel prices;
 39. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take steps to ensure that women benefit from equal pay and other social and economic rights, including insurance covering the risks

to which they are exposed by working in the fisheries sector and recognition of their specific disorders as occupational diseases;

40. Recognises that temporary fishing bans, otherwise known as biological rest periods, are an important and proven means of conserving fishery resources, as well as being an essential instrument for sustainably managing specific fisheries; recognises that establishing fishing bans during specific critical phases in the life-cycle of a species allows stocks to develop in a way that is compatible with fishing outside the rest period; believes is fair and necessary under these circumstances to financially compensate fishermen during the inactivity period, specifically through the EMFF;
41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to contemplate ways of achieving positive discrimination in favour of small-scale fishing as against large-scale fishing and fleets of a more industrialised nature, while ensuring that the management of fisheries as a whole is effective and sustainable; considers that spatially segregating different fishing techniques and thus defining areas reserved exclusively for small-scale fishing, is one of the options for consideration;
42. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take steps to promote and achieve greater recognition, both legal and social, for the work of women in the fisheries sector, and to ensure that women who work full- or part-time for family undertakings or assist their spouses, thereby contributing to their own economic sustainability and that of their families, receive legal recognition or social benefits equivalent to those enjoyed by people with self-employed status, in particular by applying Directive 2010/41/EU, and that their social and economic rights are guaranteed, including equal pay, the right to unemployment benefit if they lose their jobs (temporarily or permanently), the right to a pension, work-life balance, access to maternity leave, access to social security and free healthcare, and workplace health and safety, as well as other social and economic rights including insurance covering risks at sea;
43. Advocates retaining the special access regime for small-scale fisheries within the twelve-mile zone;
44. Considers it necessary to involve small-scale fishing, in particular, in exchanges on the spatial planning of the twelve-mile zone, where there are generally more usages and offshore wind turbines, as well as gravel extraction and marine protected areas, often having to exist alongside fishing activities in the same zone;
45. Draws attention to the need for greater involvement and participation of small-scale fishing professionals in the management, definition and implementation of fisheries policies; underlines the importance of giving greater support to fishermen's groups and professional organisations that are willing to share responsibility for applying the CFP, with a view to further decentralising the policy; urges small-scale fisheries operators either to join existing producers' organisations or form new such organisations;

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46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the

Governments of the Member States and the Regional Advisory Councils.