

Specific actions in the Common Fisheries Policy for developing the role of women

European Parliament resolution of 27 February 2014 on specific actions in the Common Fisheries Policy for developing the role of women (2013/2150(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the legislation applicable to the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), in particular Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 laying down the rules and agreements in relation to Community structural assistance in the fisheries sector,
- having regard to Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC¹,
- having regard to its position of 6 February 2013 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy²,
- having regard to its position of 12 September 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products³,
- having regard to the proposal submitted by the Commission and the positions adopted by Parliament and the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (COM(2011)0804),
- having regard to the proposal submitted by the Commission and the positions adopted by Parliament and the Council on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the rules for the participation and dissemination in Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) (COM(2011)0810),
- 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: Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2005 on women's networks: fishing, farming and diversification⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy¹,

¹ OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0040.

³ OJ C 353 E, 3.12.2013, p. 212.

⁴ OJ C 286 E, 23.11.2006, p. 519.

- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the external dimension of the common fisheries policy²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2012 on ‘The reform of the common fisheries policy – Overarching Communication’³,
 - having regard to the hearing on women and the sustainable development of fisheries areas held by the Committee on Fisheries on 1 December 2010,
 - having regard to the hearing on developing the role of women in European fisheries and aquaculture held in the European Parliament by the Committee on Fisheries and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality on 14 October 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on Fisheries and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality under Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0070/2014),
- A. whereas the work carried out by women in fisheries and aquaculture is not recognised and generally remains invisible, even though it represents considerable economic added value and contributes to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of a large number of communities and regions in Europe, particularly in areas that depend on fishing;
 - B. whereas more than 100 000 women work in the fisheries sector in the Member States, 4 % of them in the extractive sector and with jobs linked to the activities of fishing boats, as net-makers, port workers or packers, 30 % in aquaculture, chiefly shellfish gathering on foot, and around 60 % in the processing industry;
 - C. whereas the work traditionally carried out by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector is arduous: shellfish gathering on foot, traditional selling of fish in the form of mobile sales, on stalls or in shops, the manufacture and repair of fishing nets (net-makers), unloading and classification of the catch, and packaging work in particularly harsh climate conditions;
 - D. whereas the statistics grossly underestimate the reality of female work in some of these sectors, and the widespread economic crisis and high unemployment in some Member States has helped to further increase these figures and has led to a growing number of women engaging in activities in the fishing sector, particularly land-based shellfish gathering, as a means of complementing or even ensuring their family income;
 - E. recognising women’s contribution in activities related to fisheries and aquaculture, in particular those connected with making and mending fishing nets, unloading and classifying the catch, managing on-board supplies, fish processing, packaging and marketing and the management of fishing businesses;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0460.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0461.

³ OJ C 353 E, 3.12.2013, p. 104.

- F. whereas in paragraph 30 of its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy, Parliament called 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, and emphasised that the active participation of women in fishing-related activities helps preserve and ensure, firstly the survival of the fishing sector, and secondly that of traditions and specific practices, and also helps safeguard the cultural diversity of the different regions;
- G. whereas in its position of 12 September 2012 Parliament called for action to be taken to foster women's participation in producer organisations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
- H. whereas in paragraph 31 of its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy Parliament called for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to provide funding to foster women's participation in the fisheries sector, support women's associations, promote vocational training and enhance women's role in fishing, by granting support for both activities carried out on land and those associated with fishing, both upstream and downstream;
- I. whereas in paragraph 39 of its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to take steps to ensure that women benefit from equal pay and other labour, social and economic rights, including insurance covering the risks and measures for applying early retirement weightings to compensate for the arduous nature of the work (night working, danger, working hours decided by the pace of production and fishing opportunities) to which they are exposed by working in the fisheries sector, as well as recognition of their specific disorders as occupational diseases;
- J. whereas statistical data on the labour force, and in particular on gender distribution in certain activities and on artisanal or small-scale fishing, extensive aquaculture and related activities, are given low priority by comparison with data on catches, landings, tonnage, etc;
- K. whereas the statistical data for the EU and the Member States concerning the workforce in the fisheries, aquaculture and related sectors are not complete, harmonised or broken down into indicators that would make it possible to estimate women's contribution in these sectors;
- L. whereas, in spite of the work carried out by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and their key economic contribution, women do not benefit from proper social and labour protection or appropriate professional and labour status;
- M. whereas women suffer economic discrimination in the fisheries sector and are paid less than men for the same work;
- N. whereas in many cases women's work in the fisheries sector has no legal recognition and no access to social protection to match the specific risks and health effects linked to these activities;

- O. whereas in paragraph 42 of its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to take steps to 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, are given 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 wages, unemployment benefits 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 health care, workplace health and safety, and insurance covering risks at sea;
- P. whereas in its resolution of 12 September 2012 Parliament referred to the need to give greater legal and social recognition and recompense to women's role in the fisheries sector, to give women rights equal to those of men, and to give the spouses and life partners of fishermen supporting the family undertaking a legal status and social benefits equivalent to those enjoyed by people with self-employed status;
1. Urges the Commission to launch a specific statistical programme for regions that depend on fishing, paying particular attention to artisanal and coastal fishing, traditional fishing methods and specific marketing channels, and to the work and social and labour conditions of women shellfish gatherers, net-makers and artisanal workers in fisheries and related activities, with the aim of assessing the specific needs associated with women's activity and enhancing the social recognition given to these extremely arduous occupations;
 2. Considers it necessary to improve the collection and analysis of statistical data on employment in the fisheries sector, broken down by gender, type of activity and type of employment (self-employed, employed, part-time, full-time, occasional), so as to make it possible to arrive at an estimate of women's contribution in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
 3. Urges the Commission to ensure that the collection of gender-disaggregated data also covers the catch sector and that new indicators are introduced, such as age, education and training levels, and activity of spouse or partner;
 4. Considers it necessary to establish clear definitions regarding the statistical indicators used for the collection of workforce employment data in fisheries, aquaculture and related sectors; also considers it necessary to draw up a harmonised set of statistical indicators at EU level, and calls on the Member States to provide, in due time, full data in accordance with those indicators;
 5. Urges the Commission and Council to grant legal and social recognition to the role played by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and in the sustainable development of areas that depend on fishing, with the aim of removing all economic, administrative and social barriers that stand in the way of their participation on equal terms;
 6. Urges the Commission and Council to encourage the Member States to regulate and recognise as occupational diseases injuries to joints, back injuries and rheumatic diseases caused by the harsh weather conditions in which women shellfish gatherers, net-makers,

processing workers, fishers and sellers have to work, as well as injuries caused by lifting excessive weights;

7. Urges the Commission to recognise that the work carried out by women helps to improve the traceability of fishery products, which in turn contributes to consumer knowledge and ensures higher standards of quality and safety of fishery and aquaculture products, thus increasing the economic, gastronomic and tourist opportunities available to fishing areas;
8. Calls for the creation (under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and/or other instruments) of specific support mechanisms that can be activated in emergencies (natural disasters), as well as of financial compensation mechanisms to assist fishermen, fisherwomen and their families during temporary fishing bans, especially in areas where fishing is the sole source of earnings;
9. Considers it necessary to foster and provide financial support for the establishment of women's associations through national and European women's networks, in order to increase the visibility of women in the fishing sector, create social awareness of women's contribution to fishing activity, facilitate the exchange of experience, and communicate women's needs and demands, from local government level up to European bodies;
10. Urges the Commission and the Member States to facilitate access to funding for women's organisations in fisheries, aquaculture and related sectors, enabling them to implement their initiatives, consolidate their organisations and contact other women's organisations for exchanges of experience and good practice;
11. Considers it necessary to promote and strengthen women's effective participation in consultative bodies, advisory councils and decision-making, representative, regional and professional bodies, guaranteeing their participation in decision-making in both public and private sectors on equal terms with men;

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2013-2020

12. Notes that only one Member State has made use of the opportunities offered by axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund to finance projects whose beneficiaries are women, and urges the Member States to seize the opportunities offered by the EMFF in order to:
 - apply the principle of equal opportunities, both when drawing up and when developing or implementing operational programmes;
 - make the fisheries sector more women-friendly by redesigning the sector and providing suitable facilities (such as changing-rooms on vessels and in ports);
 - support associations of women and their organisation in networks (e.g. net-makers, port workers, packers);
 - support projects to mitigate the problems arising from the working conditions of women harvesting shellfish on foot, including measures to balance work and family life;
 - support projects to promote, diversify and raise the profile of the role played by women in fisheries and aquaculture;

- offer women and girls easier access to training by financing specific training and vocational education and professional recognition of their activity; Member States should, for this purpose, launch processes for obtaining officially recognised skills certificates and set up training centres for the professional activities traditionally carried out by women in the various communities;
 - offer girls improved employment opportunities and support continuity between generations, in particular by developing activities that are sustainable for the marine environment;
 - boost vocational training, in particular for women working in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, with a view to increasing their opportunities for accessing management posts and skilled technical and managerial jobs related to fisheries, on the basis of equal pay;
 - enhancing women's role in fishing, in particular by granting support for activities carried out on land and activities associated with fishing, both in production and in processing, marketing and sales;
 - promote business initiatives launched by women, including, where appropriate, the economic diversification of certain activities related to the fisheries sector, among them activities such as museology, cultural traditions, crafts, gastronomy and the restaurant industry;
 - promote business initiatives in areas of activity unrelated to fishing in coastal areas where jobs have been lost as a result of implementation of the fisheries reform;
13. Urges the Member States to facilitate soft loan channels that will make it possible to avoid the specific difficulties faced by women in relation to financing projects eligible for inclusion in national programmes under the EMFF;
 14. Calls on the Member States to support women's business initiatives by facilitating a favourable microcredit system and providing adequate information regarding funding opportunities;
 15. Urges the Member States to take measures to develop and modernise local infrastructure, diversify economic activities and improve the quality of life in fisheries areas, particularly areas entirely dependent on fishing, so as to ensure their sustainable development, while combating poverty in general, and particularly where it affects women and children, and seeking to prevent violence against women and domestic violence;
 16. Reiterates the positions taken in the context of the procedure relating to Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), as regards boosting women's participation in all areas of research, projects and scientific disciplines, in particular the participation of women who dedicate their working life to research into the marine environment;
 17. Calls on the Member States to:

- grant legal recognition to the work carried out by women who make an economic contribution to the family or who contribute through their work, even where they are not paid;
 - guarantee support for women, granting them unemployment benefits where they are forced to stop working (temporarily or permanently), the right to a pension, work-life balance, access to maternity leave (whatever their marital or civil union status within the couple), access to social security and free healthcare, and protection against risks arising from their work in the maritime and fisheries sector;
18. Notes that in paragraph 28 of its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the external dimension of the common fisheries policy Parliament calls for the EU, through the WTO, to work towards penalising countries that discriminate against women, and that in paragraph 45 of the same resolution it urges the Commission, during the negotiations on fisheries agreements, to ensure that the coastal state dedicates a substantial part of the sectoral support for development to the recognition, promotion and diversification of women's role in the fisheries sector, ensuring the application of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities for women and men, with regard in particular to training and access to funding and loans;
19. Urges the Commission to ensure that the European gender dimension is embodied and guaranteed in economic partnership agreements involving the fisheries sector;

Basic regulation on the common fisheries policy

20. Urges the Member States to ensure compliance with the objectives of the new common fisheries policy in relation to access to fishery resources based on transparent environmental, social and economic criteria, incorporating the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men;
21. Urges the Member States to recognise the occupational status of women in the event of temporary cessations of activity, including biological rest periods;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure compliance with Directive 2010/41/EU, so that women working full- or part-time in family businesses in the fisheries sector or supporting their spouses or partners, thereby contributing to their own economic sustainability and that of their families, as well as women who make their livelihood from such activity without belonging to a family unit, are given legal recognition and social benefits equivalent to those enjoyed by people with self-employed status;
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23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.