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Provisional edition

European fisheries sector crisis due to rise in oil prices

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European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the European fisheries sector crisis due to the rise in oil prices

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas energy is a significant operating cost factor in the fisheries sector, and whereas the cost of fishing is highly dependent on the price of oil,

B. whereas the recent rise in oil prices has affected the economic viability of the fisheries sector and left many fishermen worrying about how to offset these additional costs; whereas the rise in oil prices is directly affecting fishermen's incomes,

C. whereas the incomes and wages of people working in the fisheries industry are insecure as a result of several factors, such as the irregular nature of fishing, the marketing approaches employed and the way in which first-sale prices are set, which means that certain forms of national and Community public assistance need to be maintained,

D. whereas the financial and economic crisis is having an impact on industrial sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular and is jeopardising activity and employment in primary and secondary sectors,

E. whereas the Commission has adopted temporary emergency measures in the past to overcome the difficulties faced by the fisheries sector against a background of rising fuel prices,

F. whereas the price of fisheries and aquaculture products is determined by the balance between supply and demand, and whereas, owing to the European Union's high degree of dependency on imports from third countries (60%) in order to secure supplies for its internal market, producers have very little or even no influence on the price levels of fisheries products,

G. whereas the Commission authorises Member States to grant *de minimis* aid, up to a ceiling of EUR 30 000 over a three-year period and per beneficiary, to fishing firms,

1. Expresses its concern at the difficult economic situation that many European fishermen are facing, which has been further aggravated by the increase in fuel prices; expresses its support for EU fishermen, and calls on the Commission and the Council to take appropriate measures to facilitate their activities;

2. Calls on the Commission to adopt emergency measures to alleviate the difficult economic situation in which European fishermen find themselves, also taking into account the financial difficulties that several countries are currently facing;

3. Asks the Commission to raise the ceiling on *de minimis* aid from EUR 30 000 to EUR 60 000 per firm for a transitional period of three years, at the same time ensuring that environmental and social sustainability are not undermined and that competition between Member States is not distorted;

4. Emphasises the need to make use of all the possibilities and financial margins available under the Community fisheries budget in order to finance emergency support measures for the industry, thereby enabling it to overcome the difficulties posed by the rise in fuel prices until such time as other types of measure are implemented;

5. Calls for the introduction of mechanisms to improve the first-sale price and promote the fair and appropriate distribution of added value throughout the value chain in the fisheries sector, boosting the prices paid at the production stage and keeping prices for final consumers as low as possible;

6. Insists that the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) should continue to grant aid to improve the selectivity of fishing gear and to replace engines

on grounds of safety, environmental protection and/or fuel economy – above all for small-scale coastal and traditional fishermen; calls on the Commission to draw up a medium- and long-term plan aimed at improving fuel efficiency in the fisheries (including aquaculture) sector; calls, further, on the Commission to include, in its forthcoming proposals on the reform of the CFP and, in particular, its proposal for a regulation on the reform of the EFF, suitable measures to improve fuel efficiency in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;

7. Asks the Commission to propose an action plan for coastal regions and islands which have an active fishing sector;

8. Asks the Commission urgently to propose investments, at both European and national level, in new technologies in order to increase the energy efficiency of fishing vessels and so reduce fishermen's dependency on fossil fuels;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Last updated: 13 May 2011

Legal notice