

Fish stock conservation: removal of fins of sharks on board vessels

2011/0364(COD) - 22/11/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 566 votes to 47, with 16 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels.

Parliaments position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission proposal as follows:

A necessary element of the Unions marine ecosystem: Parliament underlines that shark fins do not constitute a traditional ingredient of the European diet, but sharks do constitute a necessary element of the Unions marine ecosystem. Therefore, their management and conservation, as well as, in general, the promotion of a sustainably managed fishing sector for the benefit of the environment and of the people working in the sector, should be the priority.

A new recital stresses that current scientific knowledge, based on the examination of shark catch rates, generally indicates that many stocks of sharks are under serious threat, although the situation is not the same for all of the species or even for the same species in different maritime zones. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), more than 25 % of all pelagic shark species, of which over 50 % are large oceanic-pelagic sharks, are threatened.

On-board storage of shark fins: Members want to do away with the derogations to the European ban on removing shark fins and throwing their carcasses over board. The amended text stipulates that to facilitate on board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the carcass but that they must not be removed from the carcass before landing.

Reports: where fishing vessels flying the flag of a Member State catch, retain on-board, tranship or land sharks, the flag Member State shall, in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 establishing a community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) N° 404/2011 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009, send to the Commission, annually, by 1 May at the latest, a comprehensive report on the implementation of this Regulation during the previous year. The report shall describe the monitoring of compliance with the Regulation of vessels in the Union and non-Union waters, and the enforcement measures taken by Member States in cases of non-compliance. In particular, the following information shall be provided:

- the number, date and place of inspections carried out;
- the number and nature of cases of non-compliance detected, including a full identification of the vessel(s) involved and the penalty applied for each case of non-compliance;
- the total landings by species (weight/number) and by port.