



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Fisheries

2012/2167(DEC)

21.2.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Fisheries

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the EU general budget for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission
(COM(2012)0436 – C7-0224/2012 - 2012/2167(DEC))

Rapporteur: Nils Torvalds

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Takes note of the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the Court of Auditors on the annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2011; takes further note of the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors concerning the financial year 2011; believes that the area of maritime affairs and fisheries does not figure prominently in these documents;
2. Expresses its satisfaction that the implementation for Title 11 of the budget was globally satisfactory, with an implementation rate of 97 % for commitment appropriations and 95 % for payment appropriations; further notes that the Court of Auditors had no major observations on DG MARE's Annual Activity Report;
3. Notes at the same time, however, that the Court of Auditors sees an increase of the error rate for the year 2011 and remarks that the underlying payments for the year 2011 are substantially affected by error;
4. Calls on the Court of Auditors to present the error rate for fisheries separately from environment, rural development and health, and not on an aggregate basis;
5. Recalls that in 2010 there was insufficient monitoring of catches under fisheries partnership agreements which resulted in additional payments to cover catches in excess of the negotiated quota; welcomes, therefore, the action taken by DG MARE to improve the monitoring of catches under fisheries partnership agreements, which will hopefully prevent a recurrence of this issue highlighted by the Court of Auditors; notes that the overfished amounts in 2010 were deducted from the 2011 quota;
6. Urges the Court of Auditors once again to include an audit on the external dimension of the common fisheries policy in its work programme;
7. Notes the reservations made in DG MARE's Annual Activity Report in respect of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF)¹, following the Court of Auditors' special report 12/2011, regarding investments on board funded under Article 25(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 which increased the ability of vessels to catch fish; understands that DG MARE has been working with Member States to address the identified problems by reviewing the projects funded under this provision of the EFF with the aim of eliminating ineligible expenditure;
8. Questions the technical assessment methods that led to certain expenditure under Article 25(2) of the EFF being declared ineligible on the grounds that it would increase capacity, when the expenditure concerned were in fact designed to modernise fishing activity; calls on the Commission to propose a fresh definition of capacity, in particular in order to avoid this kind of re-interpretation in the future;

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006.

9. Notes that the Court of Auditors' special report 12/2011 found critical weaknesses in the design and implementation of measures to reduce fishing overcapacity, including delays in the implementation of projects and in the setting up of management and control systems;
10. Notes that the Court of Auditors states in its special report 12/2011 that the EU fishing fleet register was not correctly updated in view of fishing vessels scrapped with public aid; takes the view that it is absolutely vital to have up-to-date and reliable data in connection with the EU fleet register, given the urgent need to effectively quantify the level of overcapacity in the EU fishing fleet and the way in which it is spread across the individual Member States and their respective fleet segments;
11. Notes that the selection criteria for fishing vessel decommissioning schemes were not always well targeted and thereby resulted in scrapping fishing vessels which had only little impact on the fish stocks in question; notes, furthermore, that the public aid rates applied for decommissioning fishing vessels often did not take cost effectiveness into account on the basis of adequate objective criteria;
12. Expresses its deep concern that public aid has been used to increase the vessels' ability to catch fish and thus increased overcapacity in the Union fisheries sector;
13. Stresses that the second reservation in DG MARE's Annual Activity Report regarding the management and control of the implementation of the EFF in eight Member States indicates that DG MARE is exercising its supervisory role in shared management;
14. Considers that in the future the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors should have a separate breakdown for the figures relating to DG MARE in order to increase transparency, and that the number of tests should be increased in order to ensure higher general accuracy from the sample;
15. Urges the Member States to take all necessary action to address the identified problems and thereby making it possible to lift the existing reservations;
16. Proposes, on the basis of the data available and despite the aforementioned shortcomings, to grant the Commission discharge in respect of its expenditure in the areas of maritime affairs and fisheries for the financial year 2011.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	19.2.2013						
Result of final vote	<table><tr><td>+: </td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>–: </td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>0: </td><td>0</td></tr></table>	+:	22	–:	1	0:	0
+:	22						
–:	1						
0:	0						
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Kriton Arsenis, Alain Cadec, Chris Davies, Carmen Fraga Estévez, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo, Iliana Malinova Iotova, Werner Kuhn, Isabella Lövin, Gabriel Mato Adrover, Maria do Céu Patrão Neves, Crescenzo Rivellini, Ulrike Rodust, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Struan Stevenson, Isabelle Thomas, Nils Torvalds, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa						
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jean-Paul Besset, Ole Christensen, Diane Dodds, Julie Girling						