



2016/2079(INI)

9.12.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the status of fish stocks and the socio-economic situation of the fishing
sector in the Mediterranean
(2016/2079(INI))

Rapporteur: João Pimenta Lopes

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the Mediterranean coastline is shared by 19 countries with legal and administrative responsibilities in this geographical area; whereas fishing in the Mediterranean is highly diverse and, while including some industrial fisheries, mainly comprises genuinely artisanal fisheries, sometimes geared simply to family subsistence, with different technical characteristics and degrees of selectivity, which makes it difficult to apply classical or traditional methods of fisheries assessment and management;
- B. whereas the rich marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean ($\approx 10\,000 - 12\,000$ species) is under serious threat from phenomena linked to global climate change, marine pollution and above all overfishing; whereas there is a general sharp decline in fish stocks in the Mediterranean ($> 90\%$ of stocks are being overfished), with some depleted stocks being at risk of collapse;
- C. whereas the socio-economic situation of the fishing sector in the Mediterranean depends, first and foremost, on a sustainable level of fish stocks;
 - 1. Points out that small-scale fishing is an essential economic and social factor in the Mediterranean and accounts for 80 % of the fishing fleet and 60 % of jobs in the sector; points to the importance of small-scale non-industrial fishing for the sustainability of fish stocks shared by different countries, biological and environmental conservation of species, the sustainable use of marine biodiversity and the socio-economic development of fishing communities, particularly rural communities; underlines that the identity, cultural heritage, traditions and values of many local communities are largely based on activities in the fishing sector;
 - 2. Calls on the Member States to tackle seafood fraud through product labelling and traceability and to increase their efforts to combat illegal fishing; regrets the lack of information available on the state of the majority of stocks ('data-poor stocks') and the fact that around 50 % of catches are not officially declared while 80 % of landings come from 'data-poor stocks';
 - 3. Notes that the socio-economic situation in the sector has deteriorated for different reasons, including the decline of fish stocks, the drop in the value of fish at first sale (which has not been reflected in the retail sales price, owing to an unfair distribution of added value along the value chain of the sector by most of the intermediaries and, in some regions, to monopolies on distribution), and the rise in the cost of fuel; notes that these difficulties have contributed to the increase in fishing effort, which is of particular concern in the case of small-scale fishing and may indeed jeopardise the future of this traditional way of life and the survival of local communities that rely heavily on fishing;
 - 4. Believes that a balance must be struck between fair competition, consumer requirements, sustainability of the fishing sector and the maintenance of jobs; stresses the need for a comprehensive approach and a strong political will on the part of all Mediterranean countries in order to face the challenges and improve the situation in the Mediterranean

sea;

5. Stresses the need of coherent rules on sport fishing in order to protect the marine ecosystem; underlines that recreational fishing must respect the same non-fishing periods that apply to professional fishing;
6. Maintains that where fisheries are concerned, policymaking should be such as to enable fishers and their associations and producers' organisations, trade unions, Coastal Action Groups (CAGs) and local communities to be involved in – and made an integral part of – decision-taking processes, in line with the CFP's regionalisation principle and including third countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin; stresses that only by creating fair, balanced and equitable conditions for all the countries involved and for all fishing operators in the Mediterranean will it be possible to ensure healthy fishery resources and sustainable and profitable fisheries, and hence to maintain current levels of employment and ideally create more jobs in the fishing sector; underlines the important role of strong and independent social partners in the fishing sector, as well as of an institutionalised social dialogue and the participation of employees in company matters;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve management, coordination and capacity-building, and to promote information and technical support and make them more readily available to fishers' and producers' organisations applying for EMFF funding (or other EU funding), which should meet the specific logistical, human resources and financial needs of the fishing sector, by means of the following measures:
 - to promote fleet renewal and modernisation with a view to improving working conditions and safety, to reduce the fishing effort while improving catches in a sustainable way by using less invasive and selective fishing gear and reducing by-catches and discards, to optimise supply chain processes, to improve energy efficiency, to enhance traceability systems and to improve and guarantee the presence on board of active and passive safety devices, such as personal locator systems in life jackets and EPIRBs, among others considered suitable under the Member States' legislation, and to ensure appropriate training in relation to safety on board and the use of the corresponding equipment;
 - to promote the recruitment, education and multidisciplinary training of young people, thereby enhancing the status of work and vocational training and supporting the emergence and development of new economic activities within the sector, and to develop work perspectives in the region in fields of employment which will provide for a decent future income, in order to ensure sustainability and territorial cohesion; stresses the need for adequate provision of and information on training for fishers by the competent authorities in this regard (including the adoption of best practice and environmental awareness-raising);
 - to encourage those working in the fishing sector and fishery product industries to join forces and organise themselves, for example through trade unions, community organisations, cooperatives and/or fishers' and fishing vessel owners' representative organisations, or to conduct joint assessment of future prospects and develop options for a decent future income, be it in fishing or other sectors;
 - to emphasise the role that women play in fishing and related production sectors in

order to increase their visibility – bearing in mind that women make up 12 % of the sector's labour force – and promote equality between men and women;

8. Underlines the importance of developing initiatives that could have a positive impact on employment and are compatible with the reduction of the fishing effort, such as fishing tourism or research activities;
9. Suggests that Member States establish a minimum wage or comparable income support to allow for a living income for fishers through legislation or collective bargaining, with due respect for their law and practices; recommends that a stable income compensation fund be set up by the Member States to cover non-fishing periods, which can comprise adverse weather phenomena that make fishing impossible, close seasons (biological rest periods) serving to safeguard the life-cycle of species exploited, environmental disasters, or events involving prolonged environmental pollution or contamination by marine biotoxins, and that such periods be treated as actual working time for the purposes of retirement pensions and other social security entitlements;
10. Stresses the need to promote collective bargaining, and encourages the social partners in the fishing sector to negotiate collective agreements in line with national laws and practices, as they are an effective instrument for safeguarding social and labour standards and ensuring a decent remuneration for all workers and fair competition in the sector; underlines the need to safeguard and enhance the rights of workers in the fishing sector, which are being particularly affected in some Member States;
11. Renews its call on those Member States which have not already done so to ratify the ILO's Work in Fishing Convention 188, which aims at ensuring that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve access to decent working conditions and adequate social protection for all workers in the fishing sector, regardless of the size and type of the enterprise which employs them, the place of employment or the underlying contract, also by using the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements signed in the region to combat social dumping and improve access to markets and finance, cooperation with public administrations and institutions and the diversification of livelihoods; underlines the importance of effective labour inspections and controls;
13. Underlines the need to improve the working conditions of fishers, given the high rate of accidents in the sector as well as the disproportionately high risk of occupational diseases, both physical and mental; stresses the need to ensure a proper work-life balance for fishers; underlines the importance of providing adequate sanitary facilities, both on board fishing vessels and on land, as well as decent accommodation and opportunities for recreational activities; stresses the need to ensure that ports, harbours and waterways remain operationally safe and navigable;
14. Acknowledges the important role of fishers with regard to saving shipwrecked refugees in the Mediterranean;
15. Stresses the need to guarantee that every fish and fishery product imported into the EU meets conditions that comply with international environmental, labour and human rights standards; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure fair competition and

sustainability in the fishing sector in order to safeguard jobs and growth; stresses that this is essential not only with regard to competition within the Union but also and in particular in relation to competitors based in third countries;

16. Stresses that the EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement, as well as any other agreement with Morocco, must respect the legitimate rights of the Sahrawi people, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	8.12.2016
Result of final vote	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;"> + : 43 - : 6 0 : 1 </div> </div>
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Czesław Hoc, Agnes Jongerius, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Jean Lambert, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, João Pimenta Lopes, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Jana Žitňanská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Georges Bach, Deirdre Clune, Karima Delli, Tania González Peñas, Edouard Martin, Evelyn Regner, Joachim Schuster, Monika Vana, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Flavio Zanonato, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Adam Gierek, Hannu Takkula