

Multi-annual plan for western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012 on the state of play regarding the proposed multi-annual plan for the western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel and the fisheries exploiting that stock (2011/2937(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2009)0189) and to Article 37 of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C7-0010/2009),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to Parliament and the Council entitled ‘Consequences of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon for ongoing interinstitutional decision-making procedures’ (COM(2009)0665),
 - having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(2) thereof,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 17 March 2010¹,
 - having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 23 November 2010 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) No .../2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multi-annual plan for the western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel and the fisheries exploiting that stock²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2010 on the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy³,
 - having regard to the Commission proposal of 13 July 2011 for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy (COM(2011)0425),
 - having regard to the oral questions to the Commission and to the Council concerning the state of play regarding the proposed multi-annual plan for Western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel and the fisheries exploiting that stock (O-000308/2011 – B7-0023/2012, O-000309/2011 – B7-0024/2012),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, under the terms of the Plan of Implementation adopted at the United Nations World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, the European Union is committed to maintaining or restoring fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, with the aim of achieving the goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015;

¹ OJ C 354, 28.12.2010, p. 68.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0421.

³ OJ C 348 E, 21.12.2010, p. 15.

- B. whereas the Common Fisheries Policy, according to Article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), seeks to ensure exploitation of living aquatic resources that provides sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions;
 - C. whereas the western stock of horse mackerel is economically the most important stock of horse mackerel inhabiting Union waters;
 - D. whereas in April 2009 the Commission proposed a management plan (COM(2009)0189) based on the preparatory work in the Pelagic Regional Advisory Council and the advice given by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF);
 - E. whereas multi-annual plans are a cornerstone of the CFP and a fundamental conservation tool establishing general provisions necessary for the pursuit of the objectives of the CFP, and must therefore be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure, in accordance with Article 43(2) TFEU;
 - F. whereas the biological information on the western stock of horse mackerel is not sufficient for a full stock assessment; whereas, however, the STECF advice indicates that a harvest control rule based on the trend in egg abundance would provide for sustainable stock management; whereas the harvest control rule should be equally based on the precautionary advice given for average recruitment conditions and on recent total allowable catches adjusted by a factor that reflects trends in the stock abundance as measured through egg production;
 - G. whereas the establishment and allocation of fishing opportunities within the Common Fisheries Policy has a direct impact on the socio-economic situation of the fishing fleets of the Member States, notably for small-scale coastal fleets;
 - H. whereas the Council cannot reserve for itself the power to adapt unilaterally the parameters defined in the proposal for setting the total allowable catches, as they are key components of the proposed long term plan;
 - I. whereas Parliament, in its position at first reading, introduced some flexibility for the Council in the mode of calculation of the total removal, in accordance with the scientifically based harvesting rules, with the aim of facilitating a compromise solution and contributing to a constructive and positive approach regarding this legislative proposal;
 - J. whereas the biological references and parameters forming part of the harvest rule should follow the most recent scientific advice and the Commission should be empowered to adopt delegated acts pursuant to Article 290 TFEU in respect of modifications of certain biological references and parameters built into the harvest rule and in order to be able to react quickly to changes;
- 1. Underlines that the plan's objective is to maintain the biomass of western horse mackerel at a level that ensures its sustainable exploitation, and to provide the highest long-term yield;
 - 2. Believes that the harvest control rule should be based in equal parts on precautionary advice and on recent total allowable catches, adjusted by a factor that reflects the recent trend in the

stock abundance as measured through egg production;

3. Stresses that the harvest control rules are core elements of the multi-annual plans that must be decided under the ordinary legislative procedure;
4. Underlines that long-term management plans applying to as many fish stocks as possible are key for the conservation of fish stocks, as stressed by the Commission in its proposal for a reformed Common Fisheries Policy;
5. Stresses that the existing interinstitutional deadlock must be resolved for the benefit of a sustainable fish stock and to allow fishing operators better forward planning of their activities;
6. Urges the Commission to take more initiatives to foster a political dialogue between the three institutions aimed at clarifying their respective roles in the decision-making process and at addressing the issue of the future architecture of multi-annual management plans;
7. Urges the Commission to act swiftly, as indicated and promised on several occasions, in order to prevent other interinstitutional blockages in relation to future long-term management plans,
8. Urges the Council to submit its position on the proposed multi-annual plan for western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel in order to allow the Parliament to start its second reading and make progress on this matter;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission for information.