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Committee on Budgets

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on the Common Fisheries Policy
(COM(2011)0425 – C7-0198/2011 – 2011/0195(COD))

Rapporteur: François Alfonsi

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

A common fisheries policy (CFP) of the European Union is indispensable in order to achieve a sustainable management of fisheries in all its dimensions, i.e. environmental, economic and social. Until now, the Common Fisheries Policy has not delivered expected results and the Commission is advocating a reformed CFP in order to avoid ongoing serious depletion of fish populations, fleet overcapacity and low profitability and low economic resilience for a significant number of fleets. Therefore, some elements need to be reformed, in order to reach the overall objective of ensuring fishing and aquaculture activities that provide long-term sustainable environmental conditions and contribute to the availability of food supplies.

A revamped policy should aim to exploit living marine biological resources that restores and maintains fish resources above levels that produce's a maximum sustainable yield. Such a system should be in place as soon as possible, as this would lead to an overall stock improvement resulting in significant economic and social improvements. On the other hand, decreasing unwanted catches, ending discarding and minimizing the negative impact on the eco-systems among others through the development of selective gear will contribute to a good environmental status.

Equal access to waters should remain a key principle of the CFP, as is the conservation of marine biological resources, which must remain a fundamental pillar to achieve the objectives of the CFP. In particular multi-annual management plans to manage exploitation of resources at sustainable levels are key to conservation. In addition, basic fleet management remains necessary with detailed overall fishing capacity ceilings per Member States.

The CFP should support the environmentally, economically and socially sustainable development of the sustainable aquaculture industry. Sustainable aquaculture has the potential to contribute to food security and growth and jobs in coastal and rural regions provided it is properly managed to minimise environmental degradation. Serious progress can be achieved when Member States develop on the basis of Union strategic guidelines national strategic plans to facilitate the sustainable development of aquaculture in relation to the business security and access to waters and space. Support for the marine Natura 2000 network of protected areas is also a vital investment in this context. There is a clear Union dimension in aquaculture development: strategic choices made at national level can have a bearing on such development in neighbouring Member States. It is essential that Member States have an opportunity to know what other Member States are planning for future aquaculture development.

The total amount foreseen for the CFP (financed through the Fisheries Fund) for the next financial period is EUR 6.68 bn.

The Rapporteur supports the broad orientations of the proposed reform.

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament adopts its position at first reading, supporting the broad orientations of the Commission proposal.

The Committee on Budgets will deliver a detailed appraisal of the budgetary aspects in its opinion on the proposal for a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Specific funding for small scale fisheries should be an issue there.