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REPORT

on the Annual Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the results of the multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 2000
(COM(2001) 541 – C5-0007/2002 – 2002/2006(COS))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Heinz Kindermann

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 1 October 2001, the Commission forwarded to Parliament its report on the results of the multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 2000 (COM(2001) 541 – 2002/2006(COS)).

At the sitting of 16 January 2002 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred the report to the Committee on Fisheries as the committee responsible (C5-0007/2002).

The Committee on Fisheries had appointed Heinz Kindermann rapporteur at its meeting of 20 November 2001.

It considered the Commission report and the draft report at its meetings of 24 January 2002, 20 February 2002 and 20 March 2002.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 17 votes to 1, with 0 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Struan Stevenson, chairman; Rosa Miguélez Ramos, Brigitte Langenhagen, Hugues Martin, vice-chairmen; Heinz Kindermann, rapporteur; Elspeth Attwooll, Ilda Figueiredo (for Salvador Jové Peres), Pat the Cope Gallagher, Willi Görlach (for Carlos Lage), Ian Stewart Hudghton, Giorgio Lisi, Yves Piétrasanta (for Patricia McKenna), Bernard Poignant, Catherine Stihler, Antonio Tajani (for Arlindo Cunha), Jaime Valdivielso de Cué (for Manuel Pérez Álvarez), Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna and Herman Vermeer (for Niels Busk).

The report was tabled on 25 March 2002.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on the Commission report on the results of the multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 2000 (COM(2001) 541 – C5-0007/2002 – 2002/2006(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission report (COM(2001) 541 – C5-0007/2002¹),
 - having regard to Article 37 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2001² on the proposal for a Council decision amending Council Decision 97/413/EC concerning the objectives and detailed rules for restructuring the Community fisheries sector for the period from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2001 with a view to achieving a balance on a sustainable basis between resources and their exploitation,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2002³ on the Commission Green Paper on the future of the common fisheries policy,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 20 January 2000⁴ on the annual report to the Council and to the European Parliament on the results of the multiannual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1997 and of 5 July 2001⁵ on the results of the multiannual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1999,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries(A5-0092/2000),
- A. whereas an appropriate policy to conserve fish stocks is the precondition for a sustainable, and profitable and competitive Community fisheries sector,
- B. whereas the primary goal of the multiannual guidance programmes (MAGP) is to ensure a sustainable balance between the available stocks and their exploitation,
- C. whereas it is essential to maintain the FIG – and hence the current aid for the modernisation and renovation of the fleet – in order to make the multiannual guidance programmes operational and thus achieve the priority objective of a lasting balance between current stocks and their exploitation,

¹ Not yet published in OJ.

² OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 25.

³ Not yet published in OJ.

⁴ OJ C 304, 24.10.2000, p. 147.

⁵ Not yet published in OJ.

- D. regretting that the data on which the report is based are still not completely uniform and therefore not directly comparable because the re-measurement of vessels does not have to be completed until 2003,
- E. whereas the Commission must have more means of effectively checking the data submitted by the Member States,
- F. whereas the segmentation of Member State fleets differs significantly,
- G. whereas a new fleet policy will shortly have to be determined as part of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and it is precisely in this general framework that the multi-annual guidance programmes must be reformed and updated,
- H. whereas fleet policy has a significant socio-economic impact on regions heavily dependent on fisheries,
- I. whereas measures to improve safety at sea should not lead to an increase in fishing effort,
1. Regrets that yet again most Member States have failed to achieve the objectives of their MAGP and calls on them to make major efforts to reduce their fleets;
 2. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has started Treaty infringement proceedings against several Member States which have repeatedly failed to meet the objectives of their MAGP;
 3. Calls on the Council and Commission to analyse the reasons for failure to meet the objectives and to devise more effective penalties, which are related to the aim of the multi-annual guidance programmes;
 4. Calls on the Member States to complete the re-measurement of their fleets as soon as possible so that future decisions are based on uniform data;
 5. Notes that although the MAGP have achieved some reduction in the fleet capacity of the Member States they have not brought about the desired balance between stocks and their exploitation largely owing, precisely, to failure on the part of a majority of the Member States to comply with the MAGP;
 6. Insists, therefore, that the MAGP should not be continued in their present form when the Common Fisheries Policy is reviewed and should be amended and updated in order to increase the competitiveness, efficiency and safety of the Community fleet and thus achieve the priority objective of a lasting balance between fish resources and their exploitation;
 7. Calls on the Commission and Council to introduce, as part of new regulations on Community fleet policy, uniform and objective criteria for measuring vessel capacity and fleet segmentation and to examine alternative or complementary methods of calculating capacity (e.g. vessel fuel consumption);

8. Calls on the Commission to develop an "entry – exit" system for fishing boats to guarantee that there is under no circumstances an increase in capacity;
9. Calls on the Commission, in its proposals for a new fleet policy, to deal specifically with the need for a balance between the fishing capacities and/or fishing efforts of the fleet segments of each Member State and the catch possibilities available to them;
10. Reaffirms that efforts to reduce fleet capacity must not be at the expense of working conditions on board and ship safety or of catch quality and that structural aid should continue to be provided for modernisation of the fleet; for this reason calls on the Commission to adopt appropriate measures, for reasons of safety, habitability and the quality of the fish processed on board, to facilitate an increase in the horse-power and tonnage of the renovated boats;
11. Calls for the introduction of voluntary scrapping programmes with attractive premiums and examination of the possibility of an increase in the Community's financial contribution;
12. Instructs its President to forward its resolution to the Council and Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

Under Article 5(1) of Council Regulation (EC) 2792/1999, which lays down the terms and conditions for Community structural measures in the fisheries sector, the European Commission is required to make an annual report to Parliament and the Council on implementation of the multiannual guidance programmes 1997 – 2001 (MAGP IV). The report is based on data submitted by the Member States by 1 May of each year on the implementation of their MAGP at the end of the previous year.

This report discusses the third Commission report on the results of programmes under MAGP IV and reflects the situation at the end of 2000.

Preliminary observations

Firstly it is important to recognise that the Commission has responded to the calls made by Parliament in the Busk report by presenting the data in the annual report more clearly.

As the annual report consists mainly of figures, which the reader can find in the report, the rapporteur would like to focus here on three aspects, which he regards as being of greatest significance:

1. The data on which the report is based
2. The results
3. The future of the MAGP

Data on which the report is based

In 1994 agreement was reached on a Community-wide definition of tonnage. However, under the relevant Regulation Member States still have until the end of 2003 to re-measure their total fleets in accordance with the new provisions and report the new figures. Although some progress has been made with the re-measurement, the data are comparable only to a limited extent given that they are not all compiled on the same basis.

Furthermore, on reading the report it is clear that there are significant differences in fleet registers and in the information provided in the reports by the different Member States. The Commission has no way of making further checks. One Member State failed to submit a report to the Commission and did not even adjust the data in the register.

Consequently, the tables on page 7 do not tell us very much.

Results

The Commission report reveals that during the first four years of MAGP IV, i.e. by the end of

2000, Community fleet capacity fell by 498.983 GT in terms of tonnage and by 459.866 kW in terms of power, representing reductions in capacity of 2.5% and 5.9% respectively.

The degree to which the MAGP have been met varied significantly from one Member State to another: 5 Member States achieved the targets for all segments of their fleets, 4 Member States achieved their overall objectives but not the individual targets in one or more segments. Three Member States have not yet met the global objectives of their MAGP. In the case of one Member State, the data are contradictory but it can be assumed that the global objective has been achieved.

Future of the MAGP

Although the Commission has already announced that the MAGP will not be continued in its present form, there will still be a need in future for instruments to control fleet capacity. The rapporteur would therefore like to set out a number of ideas in connection with the discussion of future fleet policy.

The first point to note is that we are not dealing with one single Community fleet but with the fishing fleets of individual Member States and each Member State has its own quotas for all fish species. Consequently, the quota situation of individual Member States must be taken into account in determining future fleet policy.

In connection with the reform, it should also be seen whether the current criteria for determining vessel capacity, namely tonnage and power, are really the determining factors or whether other criteria should be added or should replace them. The fuel consumption of a vessel is one option. In any case, there must be uniform criteria for measuring vessel capacity and for segmentation of the fleets so that the Community fleet register is really informative and allows measures to be taken to reduce fleet capacity in a transparent way.

In all efforts to reduce the fleet, it is also essential to avoid the measures taken having a negative impact on working conditions on board, ship safety and the food safety of the fish caught. Financial resources from the Structural Funds should therefore still be made available for fleet modernisation.

In order to achieve a further reduction in capacity, it seems sensible to focus on a voluntary scrapping programme offering attractive premiums. The possibility of increasing the Community's financial contribution should be examined. Scrapping programmes have the advantage of ensuring that the relevant capacity is taken out of operation definitively and not sold on.

The rapporteur is broadly of the opinion that limiting fleet capacity is only one measure among others and that it must be accompanied by effective action to conserve stocks. In future, greater attention should be paid to checks on landings at ports, together with the development of a system of registration and traceability, as already exists for meat.