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REPORT

on Women's networks : fishing, farming and diversification
(2004/2263(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Elspeth Attwooll

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Women's networks : fishing, farming and diversification (2004/2263(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds¹,
 - having regard to the innovative actions financed within the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) on the basis of Article 22 of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2792/1999 of 17 December 1999 laying down the detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries sector²,
 - having regard to the conference on the role of women in the fisheries sector organised by the European Commission on 23-24 January 2003,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 July 2003 on women in rural areas of the European Union in the light of the mid-term review of the common agricultural policy³,
 - having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council regulation for a European Fisheries Fund (COM(2004)0497),
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the European Fisheries Fund⁴,
 - having regard to Articles 13, 32, 137, 141 and 158 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community,
 - having regard to the extent of development of women's networks in fisheries dependent communities,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0341/2005),
- A. whereas the role of women in fisheries dependent communities has traditionally been a largely invisible one,
- B. whereas, although women form only a small proportion of those engaged in capture fishery, they are in fact active in harvesting and aquaculture, processing, marketing,

¹ OJ L 161, 26.6.1999, p. 1.

² OJ L 337, 30.12.1999, p. 10.

³ OJ C 74 E, 24.3.2004, p. 882.

⁴ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2004)0282.

research, journalism, management, business, training, including safety at sea, and representation, as well as in providing other forms of support for those engaged in the fishing industry,

- C. whereas, despite their clear economic value and the benefits they bring to the sector in general, many of these activities are undertaken on a voluntary basis or are poorly paid, with a consequent lack of adequate social protection; whereas, likewise, this work is often carried out with a high level of risk or with serious effects on health,
 - D. whereas there are many parallels in these regards with women in farming communities,
 - E. whereas women are particularly well placed to provide information on the socio-economic impact of implementing the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy and of the impact of restructuring on the industries concerned,
 - F. whereas although the role of women in fisheries dependent communities has gained greater recognition since the Commission's Women in Fisheries Conference and the extent of networking between women has increased, there seems to be insufficient information about the numbers and nature of existing networks,
 - G. whereas women's networks not only provide mutual support but can make a major contribution to the economic and social development of fisheries dependent communities,
 - H. whereas the networks still appear to be confined to local and regional levels and developed unevenly across the European Union, with a particularly low profile in the newer member states,
 - I. whereas the North Sea Women's Network has a place on the North Sea Regional Advisory Council,
 - J. whereas there are still too many legal and social barriers to the full participation of women in the fisheries sector in representative activities, which may even extend to them being barred from decision-making bodies in some communities or associations,
- 1. Recognises the role that the Commission has played in hosting the conference in January 2003 on the role of women in the fisheries sector and in funding a number of innovative actions, and welcomes its intention to host another Conference in the near future but believes, nonetheless, that insufficient progress has been made;
 - 2. Calls on the Commission and Member States to launch the actions necessary to secure greater legal and social recognition of, promote and raise the profile of the work of women in the fisheries sector, to support their efforts to obtain better living conditions for their families and communities and to guarantee social and economic rights, including wage equality, unemployment benefit in case of interruption of work (temporary or definitive), the right to obtain a pension, the reconciliation of work and family life and access to parental leave, access to social security and a free health service, and the protection of safety and health at work;

3. Calls on the Commission to produce a report as soon as possible identifying the nature, extent, objectives and activities of women's networks in fisheries throughout the European Union, paying particular attention to the situation in the newer member states;
4. Underlines the fact that women's active participation in fisheries-related activities helps to preserve cultural traditions and specific practices and aids the survival of their communities, thereby ensuring the protection of cultural diversity in these regions;
5. Recognising that these networks have emerged above all from local or regional initiatives, calls on the Commission to look into specific measures to provide active support for both the development of existing women's networks, particularly where they are less consolidated, and their creation where no such networks exist;
6. Calls on the Commission also to consider what measures it might take to assist in the development of a women's network at pan-European Union level, paying particular attention to the need to eliminate linguistic barriers;
7. Calls on the Commission to establish appropriate channels to increase and disseminate information on the situation of women in the various areas which make up and are linked to the fisheries sector, promoting sociological research on fishing communities; calls on the Commission to provide active support for existing women's networks and the creation of new networks, at national, regional and local level, and to foster the exchange of information and good practices; underlines, in this context, the need for close cooperation with the future European Gender Institute with a view to improved effectiveness as regards identifying and combating discrimination against women in these communities;
8. Calls on the Commission and Member States to give a commitment to take the necessary measures to eliminate the administrative and social barriers hampering women's full participation and progress in all areas of the fisheries sector through specific actions for the sector, and to ensure the full application of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in all fields, in particular training, and access to funding and loans, including micro-credits, etc. to encourage entrepreneurship;
9. Calls on Member States and the Commission to promote more vocational training and education specially geared to the activities of women working in the fisheries sector and to set up mechanisms for the better provision of information about training opportunities and the funding available to make use of them;
10. Welcomes the provisions in the proposed European Fisheries fund that oblige Member States to ensure that operations to enhance the role of women in the fisheries sector are promoted and calls on the Council to adopt the European Parliament's Amendment 24 in its resolution on the European Fisheries Fund which emphasised that efforts on a trans-national level should also be promoted; nevertheless urges the Commission to support specific projects which have as their objective the recognition, promotion and diversification of women's role in fisheries-related areas;

11. Urges the Commission, likewise, to draw up a specific pilot project to address the particular situation of shellfish gatherers;
12. Believes that the provisions of the European Fisheries Fund should afford an opportunity to support activities that have hitherto been undertaken on a voluntary basis and calls on the Commission to consider what other sources of funding might be made available to women's networks in the fisheries sector, including sources of micro credit;
13. Believes further that an important use of fisheries related European Funding would be the involvement of women's networks in projects researching the impact of restructuring on the fishing and farming industries;
14. Calls on the Commission to maintain the FEMMES programme and include networks of women working in fisheries-related occupations;
15. Believes also that women's networks have an important role to play in the development of Coastal Action Groups and that there should be sufficient flexibility in the use of structural funds to allow an integration of the activities of women in fisheries dependent communities and of women in farming communities in coastal areas;
16. Stresses the need to strengthen women's effective participation in representative, decision-making and advisory fisheries bodies at European, national and regional level, and believes that a Commission recommendation to the competent bodies to take action in this regard would make a positive contribution;
17. Believes that women's networks can contribute to improving safety at sea and to improving the sustainability of fisheries, notably through promoting consumption of fish from sustainable stocks and discouraging consumption of fish from unsustainable stocks
18. Calls on the Commission to report regularly to the European Parliament on the development of women's networks in the fisheries sector and on the basis on which their activities are being funded; calls on the Commission to keep Parliament periodically informed of developments in the situation for women in the fisheries sector;
19. Calls on the Commission and Member States to review the situation of women in fishing and farming communities at European, national and regional level and to address any issues relating to the adequacy of their health and other social protection and to remove any barriers to their participation in representative activities; proposes, as an initial measure, that the Commission make a recommendation to the competent bodies that they take action in this regard;
20. Shares the concern of women working in the sector at the scant presence of young people in fishing activities, and calls on the Commission to launch measures to encourage young people to work in the sector in order to ensure its continuity;

21. Calls on all those engaged in the formation of Regional Advisory Councils to ensure the participation of representative delegates from women's networks in their activities, particularly with regard to work on the socio-economic impact of fisheries policy; considers that, in this connection, consideration should be given to the extent to which women's networks can be compensated for the costs they incur;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the Member States and the Regional Advisory Councils.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Although the part traditionally played by women in fish processing and in the gathering of crustaceans has been reasonably well-documented in local histories and in literature, their role in the fisheries sector has otherwise been a largely invisible one.

More recently – and particularly following the conference organised by the Commission in January 2003 – it has become clear that, although there is only a low level of participation by women in the capture fishery (around 3%), they are active not only in processing, harvesting and aquaculture but also in marketing, research, journalism, management, training and representation in both the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Since 2003 the Commission has also encouraged the use of structural funding for innovative actions and seven individual projects have been developed in consequence. These have included networking among women's associations, meetings, seminars and exchange of good practice, training and education. The Commission has announced its intention to host a further conference in 2006 to present the results of these projects and to disseminate ideas of best practice.

The Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament decided to undertake an own initiative report in advance of this, concentrating on the role of women's networks in the fisheries sector, with a view to gaining: a fuller understanding of their nature and extent; the contribution they have made, particularly to economic and social development in fisheries dependent communities; the barriers they have encountered; and their potential.

The Committee accordingly organised a Hearing, which took place on 12 July 2005, with experts from the Netherlands, Spain, Scotland, Norway and France. Other potential contributors, notably from Italy and Ireland, were unfortunately not identified until after the Hearing.

The expert from the Netherlands (Esmeralda Loos-Dekker), explained how she had participated in a study, at the end of 1999, on the role that could be played by fishermen's wives, which resulted, in June 2002, in the establishment of the fisherwomen's network "VinVis", with the following objectives:

- a) to enhance the involvement of women in the decision making process, by improving access to fisher organisations and policy making and advisory bodies and by dissemination of information about developments in fisheries.
- b) to make the role of fishermen's wives more visible by developing means of gathering and sharing information, including that about the organisation of women in fisher families, and by engaging in discussions.
- c) to draw attention to the need to preserve fisheries as an economically, socially and culturally integrated activity, by means of a united endeavour to prevent further deterioration.

These objectives have not yet been fully realised, although good contacts have been built up, notably with the Ministry. Those with fisher organisations have proved less easy to develop.

Mrs Loos-Dekker also outlined the activities of the Seafresh Fish Market in her own village. This involves Leader + funding. It began from a working group of five people, including 3

men and 2 women (both fishermen's wives, including Mrs Loos-Dekker herself). The two women initially occupied themselves with organising seminars, including cookery demonstrations at the market. The market is increasing in popularity, with shoppers travelling to it from a distance. Mrs Loos-Dekker's work started on an entirely voluntary basis but it is becoming paid part-time and involves much of the day to day running of the project.

The two experts from Spain (Mrs Dolores Bermudez Rodriguez, President of AREAL, the Professional Association of Crustacean Fishers in Galicia - Asociación de Profesionales de Marisqueo a Pie de Galicia, and Mrs Josefa Valverde Rouco, President of AGAMAR, the Galician Association of shellfish workers - Asociación Gallega de Mariscadoras) both spoke of the difficulties experienced by women engaged in shellfish farming.

Mrs Bermudez Rodriguez explained that, until some ten years ago, such women were very isolated, suffering from low incomes and poor social security, especially given long-term dangers to their health. They also operated in the context of low crustacean stocks. Since, with help from the Galician government, they have come together and are working with the administration to turn themselves into a profession, including training courses. They are also engaged in environmental activity and seeking to convert from being simply collectors of shellfish into producers, with restocking measures.

Mrs Valverde Rouco also stressed the risks involved to health and how dangerous the conditions could be. There had been little by way of improvement and there was a need for a project to develop better harvesting techniques. In the context of the move from collection to production, she emphasised the need for resources to analyse market conditions and develop proper working plans. Courses were also needed, particularly for young people, to show how the sea can be a safe and secure environment and to encourage them to stay in Galicia.

Both experts expressed their concerns about climate change and pollution, arguing for more research and better provision for dealing with the effects. They also drew attention to the disruption of activities and loss of income arising from the presence of toxins and from the coinciding of the harvesting and tourism seasons and to the need for compensation.

The expert from Scotland (Mrs Nicki Holmyard, Co-ordinator of the North Sea Women's Network) said that the idea of forming the network had originated at the 2003 conference. It was progressed at a further conference in Peterhead in June 2004 with the support of Aberdeenshire Council and then a core group of women had met in Brussels in October 2004 to draft the network's Constitution. There are now 60 members of the network from around the North Sea.

One of the main aims of the network is to ensure that the social and economic consequences of decisions regarding fisheries, particularly those restricting activities, are taken into account at both national and European Union political levels. The network had achieved a place on the North Sea Regional Advisory Council and had been instrumental in the establishment of a socio-economic focus group. Funding had unfortunately not been sufficient to allow for a full Working Group. The focus group will, however, be working with fisheries economists to ensure that socio-economic issues are considered in a standard way in the Working Groups and in every Regional Advisory Council policy and recommendation. And it intends to set out the parameters and method for a major study on the socio-economic situation in fishing

communities around the North Sea.

Mrs Holmyard stressed the need for funding both for this study and to help co-ordinate the network (which she is currently undertaking on a voluntary basis). As well as the study, members would like to see exchange visits between countries, local training initiatives to aid access to jobs, marine tourism projects and a community health project. There is also a desire to extend the network into the newer member states.

The expert from Norway (May-Britt Manin) described her own involvement with the Council for Women in the Fisheries Industry and the Norwegian Competence Centre for Coastal Development, both of which had been formed some ten years ago and which initially acted in co-operation. The Council for Women had worked towards equal opportunities for women in the fisheries sector, recognising that too few women are represented in leading positions.

The Council had among its main objectives self-confidence and competence building, through support for recruitment and vocational training and for a number of entrepreneurial projects (including a financing scheme for women entrepreneurs with modest financial needs). The work was, however, also outward looking, including work to promote new marine species and with a strong focus on young people. An example of this was the "Euromat" project, project, which involved scholarships for young people to travel abroad to learn more about marketing opportunities, as also postgraduate scholarships and teacher training schemes.

Mrs Manin explained how, in 2001, a decision was taken to merge the Council for Women and the Competence Centre for Coastal Development. This resulted in a disappearance of women's rights as a major goal. The merged centre has now been closed down altogether. She concluded that lessons could be learnt from such experiences for other women's networks, which should regard as amongst their crucial objectives making people aware of their own value and capabilities and building educational infrastructure.

The expert from France (Mrs Michèle Pendelièvre, from Brittany and who has been active in women's networks locally, particularly in the trans-European AKTEA project financed by the Commission) began by noting that women have been at the forefront of pressure to promote safety at sea. She emphasised the additional stress created by various management measures under the Common Fisheries Policy, which are perceived by women as a threat to daily life in coastal communities. Women, too, have been amongst the first to lose jobs as the result of the closing of fish processing plants.

All this has encouraged women to come together to produce their own responses. Women's networks function in various European countries – some are fairly well-established, others are at an embryonic stage and still others have problems in getting off the ground at all. All are lacking adequate financial means and rely heavily on voluntary work.

Besides mutual support, women's networks could hope to achieve:

- a) better recognition by the European Union of the jobs linked to fisheries that are undertaken by women;
- b) collective analysis of the challenges facing communities/women in order to arrive at better strategies, including the possibility of common strategies in relation to agriculture and fisheries;

- c) ensuring that Council Directive 86/613 (on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood) extends properly to the fisheries sector;
- d) exchange of best practice in relation to training and the development of new training opportunities for women and young people;
- e) improved understanding of European Union decision making procedures and greater participation in decision making in the fisheries sector, with the removal of legal and social barriers to such participation.

To these ends, Mrs Pendelièvre stressed the need for access to IT resources and to funding, particularly the opening up of micro-credit possibilities and the use of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for training purposes.

The Hearing included contributions and questions by members of both the Committees on Fisheries and on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. The focus was on the insufficiency of information about the participation of women in the fisheries sector and of the extent of development of women's networks, on the adequacy of social protection, on the extent of unpaid activities and on the need and mechanisms for adequate financing.

In response, the Commission reiterated its intention of presenting the results of projects funded under the existing innovative actions budget line at the forthcoming conference and referred to the integration of the role of women into the EFF, particularly under Priority Axis 4 (the sustainable development of coastal areas). It itemised the enhancement of professional qualifications and the promotion of networking and the exchange of experience between women's networks as eligible measures under the fund.

In conclusion, apart from their direct engagement in a range of occupations within the fisheries sector, women have become increasingly aware of the need for mutual support, including increasing their visibility in the sector, and of their own potential in problem solving both for themselves and their communities. Women's networks have already helped considerably in these respects but they are unevenly developed and not yet operational at pan European Union level. Insufficiency of funding, with consequent over-reliance on voluntary contributions, is a barrier that needs urgently to be overcome.

5.10.2005

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Fisheries

on women's networks: fishing, farming and diversification
(2004/2263(INI))

Draftswoman: Teresa Riera Madurell

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Calls on the Commission and Member States to launch the actions necessary to secure greater legal and social recognition of, promote and raise the profile of the work of women in the fisheries sector, to support their efforts to obtain better living conditions for their families and communities and to guarantee social and economic rights, including wage equality, unemployment benefit in case of interruption of work (temporary or definitive), the right to obtain a pension, the reconciliation of work and family life and access to parental leave, access to social security and a free health service, and the protection of safety and health at work;
2. Underlines the fact that women's active participation in fisheries-related activities helps to preserve cultural traditions and specific practices and aids the survival of their communities, thereby ensuring the protection of cultural diversity in these regions;
3. Calls on the Commission and Member States to give a commitment to take the necessary measures to eliminate the administrative and social barriers hampering women's full participation and progress in all areas of the fisheries sector through specific actions for the sector, and to ensure the full application of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in all fields, in particular training, and access to funding and loans, including micro-credits, etc. to encourage entrepreneurship;
4. Calls upon Member States to offer more vocational training to women working in the fisheries sector and set up mechanisms for the better provision of information about training opportunities and the funding available to make use of them;

5. Calls on the Commission to establish appropriate channels to increase and disseminate information on the situation of women in the various areas which make up and are linked to the fisheries sector, promoting sociological research on fishing communities; calls on the Commission to provide active support for existing women's networks and the creation of new networks, at national, regional and local level, and to foster the exchange of information and good practices; underlines, in this context, the need for close cooperation with the future European Gender Institute with a view to improved effectiveness as regards identifying and combating discrimination against women in these communities;
6. Calls on the Commission to maintain the FEMMES programme and include networks of women working in fisheries-related occupations;
7. Stresses the need to strengthen women's effective participation in representative, decision-making and advisory fisheries bodies at European, national and regional level, and believes that a Commission recommendation to the competent bodies to take action in this regard would make a positive contribution;
8. Calls on the Commission to introduce the gender perspective in pilot projects funded by the CFP and the Structural Funds and to support specific projects which have as their objective the recognition, promotion and diversification of women's role in fisheries-related areas on farms in coastal and hinterland regions;
9. Highlights the specific situation of shellfish gatherers (work chiefly carried out by women over 50 who suffer work-related health problems), and calls for a specific pilot project to be drawn up to address all aspects of and provide solutions to the problems stemming from this work;
10. Shares the concern of women working in the sector at the scant presence of young people in fishing activities, and calls on the Commission to launch measures to encourage young people to work in the sector in order to ensure its continuity;
11. Calls on the Commission to keep Parliament periodically informed of developments in the situation for women in the fisheries sector.

PROCEDURE

Title	Women's networks: fishing, farming and diversification
Procedure number	2004/2263(INI)
Committee responsible	PECH
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	FEMM 13.1.2005
Enhanced cooperation	No
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Teresa Riera Madurell 25.1.2005
Discussed in committee	15.9.2005 5.10.2005
Date suggestions adopted	5.10.2005
Result of final vote	for: 25 against: 0 abstentions: 1
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Hiltrud Breyer, Edite Estrela, Claire Gibault, Lissy Gröner, Zita Gurmai, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Lívia Járóka, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Pia Elda Locatelli, Astrid Lulling, Angelika Niebler, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Marie-Line Reynaud, Teresa Riera Madurell, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Britta Thomsen, Corien Wortmann-Kool, Anna Záborská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Anna Hedh, Mary Honeyball, Sophia in 't Veld, Karin Resetarits
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

PROCEDURE

Title	Women's networks : fishing, farming and diversification
Procedure number	2004/2263(INI)
Basis in Rules of Procedure	Rule 45
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	PECH 13.1.2005
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	FEMM 13.1.2005
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Motion(s) for resolution(s) included in report	
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Elspeth Attwooll 25.11.2004
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	25.4.2005 11.7.2005 15.9.2005
Date adopted	24.11.2005
Result of final vote	Unanimously
Members present for the final vote	Stavros Arnautakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Iles Braghetto, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Paulo Casaca, Zdzisław Kazimierz Chmielewski, Carmen Fraga Estévez, Ioannis Gklavakis, Alfred Gomolka, Pedro Guerreiro, Satu Hassi, Ian Hudghton, Heinz Kindermann, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, Seán Ó Neachtain, Struan Stevenson, Catherine Stihler
Substitutes present for the final vote	Dorette Corbey, Duarte Freitas, James Nicholson
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Date tabled – A6	30.11.2005 A6-0341/2005