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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B6-0162/2008 and B6-0163/2008

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Elspeth Attwooll and Philippe Morillon

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the crisis in the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel oil prices

European Parliament resolution on the crisis in the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel oil prices

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the current crisis faced by the Community fishing industry is due to the constant rise in the price of fuel, which has risen by more than 300% in the last five years and more than 40% since January 2008,
- B. whereas prices of fisheries products are similar to those of twenty years ago, and whereas in the case of some species a considerable reduction of up to 25% has occurred since the beginning of the year owing to the massive entry of imports from illegal fishing,
- C. whereas in the fisheries sector, unlike other sectors of the economy, the price of fuel cannot affect the price of first sale of products, since in the current situation fishermen cannot set prices,
- D. whereas, in spite of the restructuring plans in force and successive business readjustments, the continual worsening of this crisis has made many companies financially unviable and other fishing enterprises have been left in high-risk situations, leading to protest demonstrations in many Member States,
- E. whereas on 28 May 2008 the three European organisations representing the fisheries sector (the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the EEC (Europêche), the European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPF) and the Specialised Committee for Fishing Cooperatives in the EEC (COGECA)) held a meeting with the Commissioner for Fisheries and presented the sector's claims,
- F. whereas a solution to the problem can only be found if serious measures are taken in the short, medium and long term,
- 1. Asks for the fishing fleet adjustment plans to be brought into force in all the Member States and for the financial means necessary for voluntary restructuring of fleets to be provided. With this aim:
 - (a) calls on the Commission to establish priority criteria for the segments of the fleet that have been most affected by this crisis;
 - (b) considers it essential that the national Operational Programmes of the European Fisheries Fund be reviewed to allow for more targeted spending;
 - (c) calls for assistance with a one-off change in fishing gear to produce a less fuel-intensive fishing method;

- (d) asks for short-term rescue aid, to be reimbursed when the restructuring measures are implemented;
 - (e) encourages the purchase of equipment to improve fuel efficiency;
2. Recalls that, together with the rising price of oil, one of the most recurrent claims of the fishing fleet with regard to the drop in the price of its products relates to massive imports of fishing products at low prices from illegal fishing, and therefore insists that:
- (a) controls on imports from illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) be intensified and improved, to which end it is vital that the legislation against IUU fishing, which is currently being debated in the Council and has been approved by the EP, is brought into force;
 - (b) controls on fisheries products from third countries be intensified and improved so as to guarantee that the same standards are applied to imported products and Community products;
 - (c) legislation on the Common Organisation of the Market in fishing and aquaculture products be amended, so that fishermen can play a more important role in the fisheries supply chain and in the added value of their products, and that all or at least part of the rise in oil prices be reflected in the price of fish at first sale;
 - (d) information on the origin of fisheries products be improved and augmented, and, above all, that the compulsory use of an informative label be guaranteed and controlled in all cases, and that fraud in the labelling of products be appropriately tackled;
3. In relation to Community rules on state aid:
- (a) calls on Member States as a matter of urgency to make payment of *de minimis* aid, up to a maximum of EUR 30 000 per company, determined by Community regulation, to all those companies that request or have already requested it;
 - (b) calls on the Commission to revise such regulation and increase the aid per vessel instead of per company so that the level of aid is brought closer to that in other economic sectors;
4. Asks the Commission, at the forthcoming Fisheries Ministers Council of 23 June, to propose all measures necessary to resolve this crisis in the short, medium and long term;
5. Requests that at the next Fisheries Ministers Council the fisheries crisis be discussed and all urgent measures needed to resolve the crisis adopted;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Governments of the Member States and the representatives of the European fisheries sector organisations.