

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3002/09  
by Marcello Vernola (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Fishing in the Adriatic Sea

Protecting the sea and regulating fisheries has always been a key area of European legislation. Particular care has been taken to discourage and prevent illegal fishing. However, it seems that no such principles apply with regard to fishing in the Adriatic, particularly in the Abruzzo and Molise regions. Nowadays the Adriatic is one of the most polluted seas in the world, although at one time it had abundant fish stocks comprising over 700 species. The impoverishment of the biomass in the Adriatic Sea is a cause for serious concern and investigation in view of its impact on employment in the sector. In Abruzzo and Molise there has been a sharp reduction in the number of people employed in the sector. In Abruzzo there are still 800 fishing boats and 6000 people employed in the industry. In Molise there are 70 boats and 100 people employed in the fisheries sector. The decline in the number of people employed in this sector is mainly attributable to the illegal fishing methods adopted by some operators in the sector who use nets with a one-cm mesh size. Furthermore the use of dragnets, which cause serious damage to the seabed and have devastating consequences on the entire ecosystem, is a problem of major importance for fisheries protection. Projections indicate that the fishable biomass will decline by 70% over the next five years. This situation demands serious attention and urgent action.

Does the Commission agree, in the light of Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93<sup>1</sup>, (EC) No 1936/2001<sup>2</sup> and, not least, (EC) No 1005/2008<sup>3</sup>, which will enter into force on 1 January 2010, thereby repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94<sup>4</sup> and 1447/1999<sup>5</sup>, it is necessary to exert greater control over the fisheries sector in order to protect biomass and the ecosystem, for the specific purpose of protecting those operating legally in the sector?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 261, 20.10.1993, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 263, 3.10.2001, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 121, 12.5.1994, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 167, 2.7.1999, p. 5.