

2014 - 2019

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2014/0138(COD)

22.1.2015

OPINION

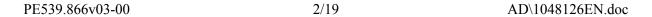
of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down a prohibition on driftnet fisheries, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 812/2014, (EC) No 2187/2005 and (EC) No 1967/2006 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 894/97 (COM(2014)0265 – C8-0007/2014 – 2014/0138(COD))

Rapporteur: Marco Affronte

AD\1048126EN.doc PE539.866v03-00



SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Driftnet fishing is connected with high incidental mortality of protected species such as marine mammals, sea turtles and sea birds. The current EU legislative framework prohibits driftnet fishing with driftnets longer than 2.5 km and the keeping on board or use of all driftnets, no matter their size, when intended for the capture of unauthorised species. In the Baltic Sea, the Belts and the Sound, it is prohibited to keep on board or use any kind of driftnets. However, the current legislative framework features several loopholes which impede its enforcement and facilitate the illegal use of driftnets. The Commission's proposal to close such loopholes is to be welcomed.

However, a total ban on small-scale driftnet fisheries without any possibility for exceptions, as proposed by the Commission, is disproportionate. Such a total ban could potentially have negative impacts on some local coastal communities and unjustifiably prohibit sustainable artisanal driftnet fisheries. Due to the lack of scientific data, it is not yet possible to quantify such socio-economic impacts or to assess the impact of artisanal driftnet fisheries on protected species. Scientific information on artisanal driftnet fishing (as regards by-catch, discards, spatial effort) is not yet available. Therefore, it is suggested to allow Member States to derogate from the total ban and allow the continuation of certain current driftnet fishing activities for a certain period of time, while the Member States collect data on those activities. Beyond that period, the continuation of current driftnet fishing activities should only be permitted if authorised by the Commission, and the Commission should only authorise a driftnet fishing activity where it is convinced that it has no harmful impact on protected and unauthorised species.

In contrast with the general lack of scientific data on the impact of small-scale driftnet fisheries, the very harmful impact of the use of driftnets with large mesh sizes on protected species, in particular cetaceans, in the Mediterranean Sea ("ferrettara") is well documented (see, for example, Di Natale et al., A review of driftnet catches by the Italian fleet: species composition, observers data and distribution along the net. Third Expert Consultation on Stock of Large Pelagic Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea, Fuengirola, Spain, 1994. Col. Vol. Sci. Pap. ICCAT, 44 (1): 226–235). It is therefore necessary and proportionate to introduce a total ban, without exception, on "ferrettara" in the Mediterranean Sea.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to take into account the following amendments:

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation Recital 3 a (new)

(3a) The incidental catching and killing of protected species, in particular cetaceans, should be addressed in a comprehensive manner across all fisheries and gear types in view of the strict level of protection they are afforded under Council Directive 92/43/EEC¹a, their high level of vulnerability and the obligation to achieve a good environmental status by 2020. To that end, an overarching legislative framework for ensuring the effective protection of cetaceans should be proposed by the Commission.

Amendment 2

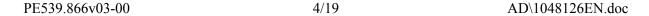
Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) The current Union legislative framework on driftnets has shown weaknesses and loopholes in that rules proved easy to circumvent and ineffective in terms of addressing the conservation concerns linked to this fishing gear.

Amendment

(10) The current Union legislative framework on driftnets has shown weaknesses and loopholes in that rules proved easy to circumvent and ineffective in terms of addressing the conservation concerns linked to this fishing gear. All existing loopholes should be eradicated in order to ensure that no form of driftnet fishing is used for catching highly migratory species.



^{1a} Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7).

Proposal for a regulation Recital 15 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(15a) A total ban on small-scale driftnet fisheries could potentially have very negative social and economic impacts on local coastal communities and on small-scale sustainable driftnet fisheries, which are carried out in accordance with ancient traditions and fishing techniques. The lack of scientific data does not enable these social and economic impacts to be accurately evaluated or the impact of small-scale driftnet fisheries on protected species to be assessed.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation Recital 15 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(15b) In order to regulate small-scale driftnet fisheries in a consistent manner, consideration should be given to all specific regional features and specific small-scale coastal activities in the Union.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 16

Text proposed by the Commission

(16) In view of the reasons stated above and in order to properly address the conservation concerns that this fishing gear continues to cause, as well as to

Amendment

(16) The use of driftnets with large mesh sizes in the Mediterranean Sea is proven to have serious negative impacts on protected species, in particular cetaceans.

achieve the environmental and enforcement objectives in an effective and efficient manner, while taking into account the minimal socio-economic impacts, it is necessary to introduce a full prohibition to take on board or use any kind of driftnets in all Union waters and by all Union vessels whether they operate within Union waters or beyond, as well as by non-Union vessels in Union waters.

Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a prohibition to take on board or use driftnets with a mesh size larger than 50 mm in the Mediterranean Sea. The Member States should collect data on the remaining driftnet fishing activities in order to enable the Commission to assess the environmental and socio-economic impact of those driftnet fishing activities.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation Recital 16 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(16a) In order to take into account new information on the environmental and socio-economic impact of remaining driftnet fishing activities, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union should be delegated to the Commission in respect of prohibiting the taking on board or use of certain types of driftnets. It is of particular importance that the Commission carry out appropriate consultations during its preparatory work, including at expert level. The Commission, when preparing and drawing up delegated acts, should ensure a simultaneous, timely and appropriate transmission of relevant documents to the European Parliament and to the Council.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation Recital 17

Text proposed by the Commission

(17) For reasons of clarity of Union

Amendment

(17) For reasons of clarity of Union

PE539.866v03-00 6/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

legislation, it is also necessary to delete all other provisions related to driftnets by amending Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98, Regulation (EC) No 812/2004, Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 894/97

legislation, it is also necessary to delete all *outdated* provisions related to driftnets *contained in Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97*, (EC) No 812/2004 *and* (EC) No 2187/2005.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation Recital 18

Text proposed by the Commission

(18) Vessels carrying out fisheries with small-scale driftnets may need some time to adjust to the new situation and necessitate a phasing-out period. *This Regulation* should therefore *enter into force on 1 January 2015*.

Amendment

(18) Vessels carrying out fisheries with small-scale driftnets may need some time to adjust to the new situation and necessitate a phasing-out period. The prohibition on driftnets with a mesh size larger than 50 mm in the Mediterranean Sea should therefore apply from 1 January 2016.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation Recital 18 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(18a) The new situation could have negative socio-economic impacts that cannot yet be assessed accurately, due to the lack of scientific data on local coastal communities. A substantial part of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund should, therefore, be earmarked to support fishermen in their transition towards new, more selective and sustainable fishing gear.

Proposal for a regulation Recital 18 b (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(18b) Any ban on the use of driftnets should fully take account of the heightened role of Regional Advisory Councils and should be supported by a full and accurate impact assessment, complete with robust data demonstrating precisely where the use of driftnets continues to pose a significant environmental problem. To date, such a comprehensive impact assessment has yet to be carried out. As a result, implementing a universal ban on driftnet fisheries throughout all EU waters would run in stark contradiction to the Commission's previously stated commitment of promoting an agenda of regionalisation and subsidiarity.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation Article 1

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 1

Scope

This Regulation shall apply to all fishing activities within the scope of the Common Fisheries Policy as set out in Article 1(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

Justification

deleted

It is preferable to strengthen the rules on driftnet fisheries in the existing legislation, rather than to introduce a new piece of legislation. Therefore, the Articles in the COM proposal which do not amend existing legislation should be deleted.

PE539.866v03-00 8/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

Proposal for a regulation Article 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 2

deleted

Definition

- 1. For the purpose of this Regulation the definitions set out in Article 4(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 shall apply.
- 2. In addition, a 'driftnet' means a net made up of one or more walls of netting, hung jointly in parallel on the headline(s), held on the water surface or at a certain distance below it by floating devices and drifting with the current, either independently or with the boat to which it may be attached. It may be equipped with devices aiming to stabilise the net or to limit its drift such as a sea-anchor or an anchor on the bottom attached at one single end of the net.

Justification

It is preferable to strengthen the rules on driftnet fisheries in the existing legislation, rather than to introduce a new piece of legislation. Therefore, the Articles in the COM proposal which do not amend existing legislation should be deleted. The improved definition suggested by the Commission should be integrated into the existing legislation (see amendments on Article 2a (new), Article 4(2a) and 4(3)(a)).

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 a – introductory part and point 1 (new) Regulation (EC) No 894/97 Article 11 – paragraph 1

Present text Amendment

Article 2a

AD\1048126EN.doc 9/19 PE539.866v03-00

Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 894/97

Regulation (EC) No 894/97 is amended as follows:

- (1) Article 11(1) is replaced by the following:
- '1. "Driftnet" means a net made up of one or more walls of netting, hung jointly in parallel on the headline(s), held on the water surface or at a certain distance below it by floating devices and drifting with the current, either independently or with the boat to which it may be attached. It may be equipped with devices aimed at stabilising the net or limiting its drift, such as a sea-anchor or an anchor on the bottom attached at one single end of the net.'

Justification

The definition suggested by the Commission closes existing loopholes and should therefore be integrated into the existing legislation.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 a – point 2 (new) Regulation (EC) No 894/97 Article 11a

Present text

1. 'Drift net' means: any gillnet held on

below it by floating devices, drifting with the current, either independently or with

the sea surface or at a certain distance

the boat to which it may be attached. It

stabilise the net or to limit its drift

may be equipped with devices aiming to

- 1. *From 1 January 2002*, no vessel may keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more drift-nets intended for the capture of species listed in Annex VIII.
- 2. *From 1 January 2002*, it is prohibited to land species listed in Annex VIII which have been caught in drift-nets.
- 3. Until 31 December 2001, a vessel may keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more drift-nets referred to in paragraph 1 after receiving authorisation from the

Amendment

- (2) Article 11a is replaced by the following:
- '1. No vessel may keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more driftnets intended for the capture of species listed in Annex VIII.
- 2. It is prohibited to land species listed in Annex VIII which have been caught in driftnets.
- 3. In the Mediterranean Sea, from 1 January 2016, no vessel may keep on board, or use for fishing, driftnets with a mesh size larger than 50 mm.

PE539.866v03-00 10/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

competent authorities of the flag Member State. In 1998, the maximum number of vessels which may be authorised by a Member State to keep on board, or use for fishing, one or more driftnets shall not exceed 60 % of the fishing vessels which used one or more drift-nets during the period 1995 to 1997.

- 4. Member States shall communicate to the Commission for each target species by 30 April of each year, the list of vessels authorised to carry out fishing activities using the drift-nets referred to in paragraph 3; for 1998, the information shall be sent not later than 31 July 1998.
- 4. In the Mediterranean Sea, from 1 June 2015, fishing with driftnets known in Italian as 'ferrettara' shall be permitted only if carried out in compliance with the following criteria:
- with driftnets with a mesh size smaller than 50 mm;
- with driftnets shorter than 400 m;
- with vessels measuring less than 7 metres in length;
- the fishing activity takes place within three miles of the coast; and
- for a maximum period of use of six months per year.'

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 a – point 3 (new) Regulation (EC) No 894/97 Article 11a a

Present text

Amendment

(3) The following Articles are inserted:

'Article 11aa

From 1 June 2015, no vessel that keeps on board driftnets may, at the same time, keep on board other types of fishing gear.

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 a – point 3 (new) Regulation (EC) No 894/97 Article 11a b

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 11ab

- 1. By 31 May 2017, Member States shall submit the following information to the Commission:
- an inventory of the types of driftnets used and a definition of those types;
- the period in each year during which driftnets are used;
- a list of fishing vessels using driftnets;
- a comprehensive study on driftnet fishing in the Member State concerned, covering at least the three preceding years and including, at least, information concerning the target species, by-catch, discard, area covered, and time period;
- a comprehensive study on the impact of the current use of driftnets on the marine environment and on marine biological resources, including targeted and bycatch species, protected species under Union legislation and unauthorised species as listed in Annex VIII;
- a socio-economic study on the impact on local communities of a ban on each type of driftnet to be allowed.
- 2. By 31 May 2018, the Commission, taking into account the information submitted by the Member States, shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the environmental and socio-economic impact of the remaining driftnet fishing activities.

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 11ac prohibiting the taking on

PE539.866v03-00 12/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

board or use of certain types of driftnets where it is convinced that the type of driftnets in question has a harmful impact on protected and unauthorised species.

Following the adoption of a delegated act prohibiting the taking on board or use of a certain type of driftnet, Member States shall, where applicable, take measures to alleviate possible adverse socio-economic impacts on coastal communities.

3. Member States concerned shall present a plan for the allocation of funds from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in order to support fishermen in their transition from driftnet fisheries to more selective and sustainable fishing gear, taking into account the socio-economic studies on the impact on local communities of a ban on each type of driftnet. The plan must become operational as soon as possible in order to enable the driftnets concerned to be replaced before their prohibition enters into force.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation Article 2 a – point 3 (new) Regulation (EC) No 894/97 Article 11a c

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 11ac

- 1. The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.
- 2. The power to adopt delegated acts referred to in Article 11ab shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of four years from 1 January 2018. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of

- the four-year period. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period.
- 3. The delegation of power referred to in Article 11ab may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect the day following the publication of the decision in the Official Journal of the European Union or at a later date specified therein. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated acts already in force.
- 4. As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.
- 5. A delegated act adopted pursuant to Article 11ab shall enter into force only if no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or the Council within a period of two months of notification of that act to the European Parliament and the Council or if, before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.'

Proposal for a regulation Article 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 3

deleted

PE539.866v03-00 14/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

Prohibition of driftnets

It shall be prohibited:

- (a) to catch any marine biological resource with driftnets; and
- (b) to keep any kind of driftnet on board of fishing vessels.

Justification

It is preferable to strengthen the rules on driftnet fisheries in the existing legislation, rather than to introduce a new piece of legislation. Therefore, the Articles in the COM proposal which do not amend existing legislation should be deleted

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 1 Regulation (EC) No 850/98 Article 20 – paragraph 3

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

1. In Article 20 of Regulation (EC) No 850/98, paragraph 3 is deleted.

deleted

Justification

Article 20(3) of Regulation (EC) No 850/98 authorises driftnet fishing for herring in a certain part of the east coast of Ireland and Northern Ireland under certain conditions, which is considered sustainable and should therefore continue to be authorised.

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 2 – point a Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 Article 1a

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(a) Article 1a is deleted;

(a) Article 1a is replaced by the following:

"Driftnet" means a net made up of one or more walls of netting, hung jointly in parallel on the headline(s), held on the water surface or at a certain distance

AD\1048126EN.doc 15/19 PE539.866v03-00

below it by floating devices and drifting with the current, either independently or with the boat to which it may be attached. It may be equipped with devices aimed at stabilising the net or limiting its drift, such as a sea-anchor or an anchor on the bottom attached at one single end of the net.'

Justification

Member States should be given the option to allow small-scale driftnet fisheries under strict conditions. Therefore, the existing provisions on small-scale driftnet fisheries in Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 need to be maintained. The new definition of "driftnet" suggested by the Commission closes existing loopholes and should therefore be integrated into Regulation (EC) No 812/2004. However, Annex I, point A(b) and E(b) relate to driftnet fisheries in the Baltic Sea, are therefore outdated and should be deleted.

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 2 – point c Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 Annex III – point D

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(c) in Annex III, point D is deleted.

deleted

Justification

Member States should be given the option to allow small-scale driftnet fisheries under strict conditions. Therefore, the existing provisions on small-scale driftnet fisheries need to be maintained. Annex III point D of Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 provides that driftnet fishing is to be monitored in certain parts of the Atlantic as regards incidental catches of cetaceans.

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 3

Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005Article 2 – point o, Article 9 and Article 10

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

3. Article 2(o), Article 9 and Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 are

3. Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 is amended as follows:

PE539.866v03-00 16/19 AD\1048126EN.doc

deleted.

- (a) Article 2(o) is replaced by the following:
- '(o) "driftnet" means a net made up of one or more walls of netting, hung jointly in parallel on the headline(s), held on the water surface or at a certain distance below it by floating devices and drifting with the current, either independently or with the boat to which it may be attached. It may be equipped with devices aimed at stabilising the net or limiting its drift, such as a sea-anchor or an anchor on the bottom attached at one single end of the net.';
- (b) Article 9 is replaced by the following:

'Article 9

Prohibition of driftnet fisheries

It shall be prohibited to keep on board, or use for fishing, driftnets.';

(c) Article 10 is deleted.

Justification

The total prohibition of driftnet fisheries in the Baltic Sea, the Belts and the Sound provided for by Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 should be maintained. The definition of "driftnet" suggested by the Commission closes existing loopholes and should therefore be integrated into Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005. The provisions relating to temporary derogations from the ban on driftnet fishing in 2006 and 2007 are outdated and should be deleted.

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 4 Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 Annex II – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

4. In Annex II (a) of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006, the words "and drifting nets" are deleted.

deleted

Justification

Member States should be given the option to allow small-scale driftnet fisheries under strict conditions. Therefore, the existing provisions on small-scale driftnet fisheries need to be maintained. Annex II of Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 establishes requirements relating to the characteristics of fishing gear in the Mediterranean Sea.

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation Article 5

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

Article 5 deleted

Repeal

Regulation (EC) No 894/97 is repealed.

Justification

It is preferable to strengthen the rules on driftnet fisheries in Regulation (EC) No 894/97, rather than to introduce a new piece of legislation.

Amendment 25

Proposal for a regulation Article 6

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

This Regulation shall enter into force on *1 January 2015*.

This Regulation shall enter into force on ...*.

^{* 20} days after publication of this Regulation in the Official Journal.

PROCEDURE

Title	Prohibition on driftnet fisheries
References	COM(2014)0265 - C8-0007/2014 - 2014/0138(COD)
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	PECH 3.7.2014
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	ENVI 3.7.2014
Rapporteur Date appointed	Marco Affronte 5.9.2014
Discussed in committee	6.11.2014
Date adopted	21.1.2015
Result of final vote	+: 51 -: 11 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Lynn Boylan, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Nessa Childers, Mireille D'Ornano, Miriam Dalli, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Stefan Eck, Eleonora Evi, José Inácio Faria, Francesc Gambús, Iratxe García Pérez, Elisabetta Gardini, Enrico Gasbarra, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Jytte Guteland, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Marcus Pretzell, Michèle Rivasi, Teresa Rodriguez-Rubio, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Dubravka Šuica, Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, Nils Torvalds, Glenis Willmott, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Nicola Caputo, Esther Herranz García, Gesine Meissner, James Nicholson, Alojz Peterle, Bart Staes