

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0515/04
by Luís Queiró (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Scientific and technical opinions for management of Community fisheries

The Carlos Lage report (A5-0023/2004) tabled in the EP plenary on 10 February 2004 raises the important issue of the reliability of the scientific opinions used for fisheries management, given the frequent disagreements between scientists and fishermen over the state of fish stocks. EU measures based on the available scientific opinions can have severe social and economic consequences for fishing communities, and it is therefore necessary to be aware of the importance of the matter and the need to improve the quality of the opinions.

Carlos Lage's warning comes at a timely moment, coinciding with the need for the Community to ground the common fisheries policy in scientific opinions that are of higher quality and more relevant characteristics. This will allow a more scientific basis than hitherto.

The 'apparent unwillingness' on the Commission's part identified by Carlos Lage cannot be allowed to continue: the Commission seems unwilling to take proper account of the various scientific opinions available, and thus runs the risk of appearing biased in its decisions, which as a rule tend to be unfavourable to the already highly vulnerable fishing communities.

Is the Commission willing to respond positively to Parliament's position, as now adopted, and submit divergent scientific opinions to a higher scientific body with a view to resolving their contradictions?