

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0104/06  
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to the Commission

Subject: Ban on anchovy fishing

In December 2005 the Council of Ministers decided to lift the ban on anchovy fishing at the end of March this year, despite the more cautious approach advocated by the Commission, which is in favour of maintaining the ban until June in order to protect stocks of this species, and despite the views of a large proportion of the fishing sector concerned.

An end to the ban will not only jeopardise the already critical situation of this fishing sector, but will not benefit all anchovy fishermen because the reduced allowable catch of 5 000 tonnes could be used up and even far exceeded in a very short period of time by the first boats that start the fishing season. The measure would thus discriminate financially against a section of the fleet, whilst entailing the risk of overexploiting the species.

In view of the Council of Ministers' premature decision, which was adopted on the basis of purely political considerations without reference to scientific criteria, would it not perhaps be appropriate for the Commission to re-examine the situation of this fishing sector before ending the ban on the scheduled date? Does the Commission also intend to introduce new precautionary measures to protect this fishing sector?