

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3177/06
by Henrik Kristensen (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Studies relating to calculation of sandeel quotas for 2006

On 19 June 2006, the Commission decided that the North Sea sandeel quota for 2006 would be 300 000 tonnes and that the fishing effort would be limited to the 2003 level. However, the various biologists who took part in the studies on which the quota is based are not agreed about the results.

An STECF working party, including British and Danish biologists led by the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research, estimated the annual volume of sandeel to be more than 500 000 million individuals. That conclusion could have resulted in a set quota of 600 000 tonnes. However, the STECF as a whole calculated that the stock was only between 300 000 and 500 000 million sandeel, which entailed a quota of 300 000 tonnes.

What calculations and results form the basis for the final conclusion to set a North Sea sandeel quota for 2006 at 300 000 tonnes?

How does the Commission explain that the results arrived at by the STECF working party led by the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research were not used as the basis for the final decision on the size of the sandeel quota for 2006?

What will the Commission do in future to ensure consistency between the advice given by biologists and the conclusions drawn by the STECF?