

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4023/07
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to the Commission

Subject: Bluefin tuna fishing in the Mediterranean and East Atlantic

On 11 June 2007 the Council adopted Regulation EC No 643/2007¹ amending Regulation EC No 41/2007² as concerns the recovery plan for bluefin tuna recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

Two measures are being taken as part of this recovery plan, one with regard to fishing periods and the other to the minimum weight of the bluefin tuna caught.

However, the text does not respect the principle of equal treatment for bluefin tuna fishermen in the European Union. The rules governing the minimum weight of fish caught and the fishing periods differ according to the geographical areas of the catches.

What are the reasons for such disparities in the way Mediterranean and East Atlantic fishermen are treated?

The restrictions imposed on French bluefin tuna fishermen in the Mediterranean could seriously disrupt the sector's socio-economic balance. While market demand is for tuna weighing around 20 kg, tuna fishing fleets are only authorised to catch fish of 30 kg or more. The fishing period laid down by the regulation takes no account of the fishing traditions of Mediterranean French fishermen, whose season is being reduced by two weeks, thereby significantly cutting their turnover. Around one thousand fishermen and their families are affected by these measures.

In what way is bluefin tuna fishing more harmful in the Mediterranean than in the East Atlantic?

¹ OJ L 151, 13.6.2007, p. 1.

² OJ L 15, 20.1.2007, p. 1.