

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4195/07
by Josu Ortuondo Larrea (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Bluefin tuna recovery plan

Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean blue fin tuna stocks have been in alarming decline for decades; the scientists of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), in the last three years three times more tuna have been caught than would guarantee the viability of stocks. The over capacity of the fleet and inadequate controls (on catches, fishing effort, closed seasons, minimum size, etc.) have been identified as the major causes of the current situation.

Last June, after a longer delay than would have been ideal, the Council finally adopted legislation which incorporated the Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan recommended by ICCAT into European law, establishing a Community quota and the corresponding share-out amongst the Member States. We can therefore say that the Plan has been in operation at Community level since June 2007.

Given that the Commission has highlighted overfishing and the inefficient application of the control measures which existed hitherto as the main causes of the current problems, since they permitted the emergence of illegal and irresponsible fishing,

1. what measures has the Commission put in hand in order to ensure that the Multi-annual Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan is strictly complied with by the Member States? Has the Commission adopted any effective mechanism to stop the overfishing of bluefin tuna by the Member States?
2. Does the Commission know whether any Member States have exceeded their bluefin tuna quota?