

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0045/08
by Duarte Freitas (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks recovery plan/TACs and quotas for 2008

The Council of Fishery Ministers which concluded on 19 December 2007 established the fishing opportunities for 2008. A 15% quota increase for Southern hake was established for Portugal, on the basis of scientific studies carried out by the competent bodies, which showed that stocks had recovered well.

Despite this position, the Commission decided (in the wake of the publication of Regulations (EC) No 2166/2005¹ of 20 December and (EC) No 51/2006² of 22 December (Annex II-b), whose provisions had consolidated the Southern Hake and Norway Lobster Recovery Plan in ICES sections IX and VIII-c) to adopt the proposal to reduce fishing days, in keeping with what has been happening since 2005, at a rate of 10% per year.

This paradoxical position severely penalises the multi-gear and multi-species Portuguese fleet, which has survived the successive cutbacks and limitations on fishing at high cost.

1. Is it not a sheer absurdity simultaneously to increase the quota and reduce the fishing effort for one and the same species in this way?
2. Given the favourable hake stock recovery indicators achieved under the Recovery Plan, is the Commission considering reviewing the annual rate of fishing effort reduction established in the Recovery Plan?

¹ OJ L 345, 28.12.2005, p. 5.

² OJ L 16, 20.1.2006, p. 1.