



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Committee on Fisheries

2014/2214(INI)

23.6.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on Fisheries

for the Committee on Regional Development

on an EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region
(2014/2214(INI))

Rapporteur: Norica Nicolai

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas, as the Commission rightly evaluates, there are large socio-economic differences between the countries involved in this strategy, especially between EU Member States and non-Member States; whereas the Commission will present to Parliament the financial contributions of non-Member States for the implementation of this strategy;
- B. whereas applying and respecting the CFP rules and objectives should be one of the most important evaluation targets for all the countries involved in this strategy; whereas, additionally, the quantitative target of at or below the 'Maximum Sustainable Yield' should be part of any evaluation concerning the marine environment and fisheries in the region;
- C. whereas the Adriatic Sea, due to its semi-enclosed nature is especially vulnerable to pollution and has unusual hydrographic features such as the fact that the depth and coastline vary considerably between the north and south of the region; whereas fish stocks are shared among all the coastal countries, which puts regeneration of the stocks under sustained pressure; whereas measures within the future framework regulation on technical measures in the reformed CFP should be devised on a regional basis and tailor-made to the specificities of this area and its marine resources and fisheries;
- D. whereas the region's waters are threatened by various sources of pollution, including untreated waste and litter, eutrophication from agricultural runoff and fish farms, and whereas, given that environmental protection is part of the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, it is of the utmost importance to understand that economic development can only be conceived in the context of environmental sustainability;
- E. whereas the Commission, in both the strategy and the action plan, admits to not having a complete evaluation of the status quo in the region and the countries, owing to the lack of data;
- F. whereas, according to the Commission, the EU will be co-financing the projects together with the Members States;
- G. whereas the blue economy represents a potential solution to the economic crisis as it boosts new jobs creation, growth and economic development, especially in coastal and island countries; whereas the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region cannot be implemented without taking into consideration the concept of the blue economy as it covers a wide range of economic sectors linked to the seas and oceans, spanning traditional and emerging sectors including fisheries, aquaculture, (seagoing) shipping and inland waterway transport, ports and logistics, tourism;
- H. whereas the strategy is as good as the projects financed and supported by the Member States;

- I. whereas all the countries wish to achieve economic growth and development;
 - J. whereas blue growth, which is part of this strategy and of the action plan accompanying it, is a platform for sustainable development projects especially for these types of regions;
 - K. whereas fisheries, although one of the most important sectors in this region, are not covered by a specific part of the strategy, but instead different aspects are distributed across a number of pillars;
 - L. whereas an increase in maritime transport and in the cruise ship tourism industry are part of the strategy and of the action plan for achieving development and economic growth;
 - M. whereas an increase in maritime activity could damage the already endangered fish stocks in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas;
1. Calls on the Commission, as an independent facilitator in this strategy, to underline the importance of creating the conditions for reducing socio-economic differences between the countries; reiterates that the aim of the strategy is to help strengthen economic and social cohesion within the European Union and with the third countries of the Ionian-Adriatic region, while supporting and promoting efforts to align the current legislation on fisheries with the goals laid down in the CFP and to bring about solid cross-border cooperation among the countries in the region;
 2. Calls on the Commission to ensure, to the best of its abilities, that the fishing industry, fish stocks, the maritime environment and all other matters relating to this sector are coordinated and managed in a sustainable manner among all pillars and that all countries, including the third countries of the macro-region involved in projects, act in accordance with, and respect, the values, principles and objectives of the CFP, and calls on both the Commission and the states involved in the strategy to develop common projects in compliance with these principles;
 3. Emphasises the importance of supporting the implementation of the new Directive establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (through coordinated planning) as well as enhanced management in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture, in order to contribute to a more sustainable use of existing natural resources and thus to sustainable growth; considers that proper joint governance of the maritime space provides an important framework for a sustainable and transparent use of maritime and marine resources;
 4. Calls on the Commission to actively promote the establishment of Fisheries Local Action Groups, which could represent a natural tool for diversifying fisheries; stresses that sustainable and profitable fisheries and aquaculture require strengthened stakeholder involvement in the overall management, as well as improved and diversified fisheries activities;
 5. Calls on the Commission to formulate as soon as possible a multiannual fisheries management plan for these two sea basins;
 6. Calls, given that an increase in maritime activity could affect the health of the fish stocks

in the region and that many species are already struggling, for a thorough evaluation and analysis of the evolution of the stocks to be carried out constantly and shared among all the countries; asks for the precautionary principle to be applied whenever needed;

7. Calls on the Commission, given that the region has a particularly sensitive marine ecosystem, for any factor such as maritime transport or waste, pollution of water, future drilling or building of new infrastructure on the coast that might impact on the health of the fish stocks, which are already in a difficult situation, to be evaluated with a comprehensive environmental impact analysis; insists that the precautionary principle and that of sustainability be applied whenever necessary, and calls on the Commission to update the list of maritime activities (deep-sea mining, offshore energy production, etc.) which could have an impact on the marine environment and on the status of fish stocks;
8. Calls on the Commission, given that an increase in maritime activity is progressively restricting fishing grounds, to make sure that the interests of the sectors concerned are taken into account in an equitable way at every stage in the development of maritime activities, namely when designing maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management;
9. Calls for projects seeking to assess the impact of indirect fishing (ghost nets, mussel cultivation meshes) and by-catches of protected species to be evaluated and promoted, it being estimated that, in the Adriatic alone, over 40 000 sea turtles are caught accidentally; takes the view that environmental studies and studies on means of alleviating the problem (such as turtle excluder devices) are urgently necessary;
10. Calls on the Commission to encourage the development of sustainable recreational fisheries in the region as well as sustainable and profitable tourism and to promote integrated policies for fishing and tourism (fishing tourism, mariculture, etc.) in compliance with the principle of sustainability;
11. Calls on the Commission to encourage and support projects that offer a real and sustainable development for the small remote communities that live on islands and secure their day-to-day income through small-scale fisheries;
12. Calls on the Commission to support and promote the involvement of fisheries and fishery workers in projects such as those relating to cultural and heritage tourism, encompassing fisheries and the rediscovery of seafaring activities and traditional fishing grounds and occupations;
13. Is concerned about the damage caused by plastic waste at sea; calls on the Commission to support initiatives to collect and recycle this waste; stresses the importance of involving fishermen in the process;
14. Calls on the Commission to register recreational fishing catch volumes, to regulate this activity and to make both recreational and professional fishing activities subject to MSY objectives;
15. Calls on the Commission, given the need for a fish repopulation of some zones of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, to ensure that the marine nursery areas for different species of

fish are accurately identified and protected to provide the necessary financial support for the creation of artificial reefs and to step up existing efforts to establish a coherent network of marine protected areas in the region, ensuring that all biologically important areas are protected in accordance with relevant international commitments such as the Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity;

16. Supports the creation of a quality label for high-quality seafood products bearing the Adriatic-Ionian label in order to increase the competitiveness of the industry and provide consumers with a certification guaranteeing the quality of fisheries and fish farming products;
17. Stresses that the development of aquaculture and mariculture can play an important role not only in the recovery of species diversity but also in the economic growth of the Adriatic and Ionian region;
18. Calls on the Commission to address as a matter of the utmost urgency the lack of precise, comprehensive data regarding maritime resources, and the level of water pollution caused by plastic waste, untreated wastewater and invasive species contained in ballast water discharge, which makes the evaluations unclear and unreliable; calls on the Commission, given that fisheries data, fish stocks evaluation and all the other related analyses are incomplete, to address this before starting to fund other developments; calls on the Commission to promote fruitful scientific cooperation among the actors of the Adriatic-Ionian region, and to ensure that the countries concerned implement reforms in order to achieve the capacity to perform data collection, analysis and evaluation with the aim of identifying opportunities for sustainable exploitation of marine resources;
19. Calls on the states involved in the strategy to improve environmental quality through projects aimed at reducing chemical, physical and microbiological pollution, and to jointly develop strategies to decrease microplastics and other litter in the region's waters, while coordinating clean-up of existing ones, optimising the activities of maritime traffic with the aim of achieving sustainability, protecting biodiversity, investing in marine recovery areas and addressing the problem of eutrophication from agricultural runoff;
20. Calls on the Commission to present a report to Parliament and the Council every year, starting with the implementation year and ending with the final evaluation after the 2020 target; this report should be based on reports and analyses carried out by the coordinators, in conjunction with the evaluations collected by the Commission from other stakeholders;
21. Calls on the Commission and the states involved in the strategy to promote the fundamental work of women in the fisheries sector, to promote their professional qualification and their inclusion in the coastal action groups and producers' organisations;
22. Calls on the Commission and the states involved in the strategy to provide incentives that attract young people to the field of fisheries and aquaculture in the Adriatic and Ionian region and encourage them to undertake such activities;
23. Calls on the Commission to intensify the exchange of good practices such as the sustainability of projects developed by the Coastal Action Groups.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.6.2015
Result of final vote	+: 20 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Renata Briano, Alain Cadec, Richard Corbett, Diane Dodds, Linnéa Engström, João Ferreira, Raymond Finch, Ian Hudghton, Carlos Iturgaiz, Werner Kuhn, António Marinho e Pinto, Gabriel Mato, Norica Nicolai, Ulrike Rodust, Remo Sernagiotto, Ricardo Serrão Santos, Isabelle Thomas, Peter van Dalen, Jarosław Wałęsa
Substitutes present for the final vote	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, José Blanco López, Marek Józef Gróbarczyk, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Francisco José Millán Mon
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Tim Aker