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# **DRAFT REPORT**

Innovation and diversification in non-industrial coastal fishing in regions  
dependent on fishing  
(2015/2090(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### **Innovation and diversification in non-industrial coastal fishing in regions dependent on fishing (2015/2090(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council,
- having regard to Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on measures during the adoption of which it is necessary to take into account the special characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on small-scale coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and the reform of the common fisheries policy<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2013 on marine knowledge 2020: seabed mapping for sustainable fisheries<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 May 2014 entitled ‘Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth’ (COM(2014)0254),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2010 entitled ‘Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative: Innovation Union’ (COM(2010)0546),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, delivered on 15 October 2014, on the communication entitled ‘Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth’ (2015/C 012/15),

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0460

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0438

- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions, delivered on 21 January 2015, on the communication entitled ‘Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth’ (2015/C 019/15),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 September 2012 entitled ‘Blue Growth – opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth’ (COM(2012)0494),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2010 entitled ‘Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 8 September 2015 on untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to create jobs and growth<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 May 2013 entitled ‘Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area: delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2013)0279),
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper of 29 August 2012 entitled ‘Marine Knowledge 2020: from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting’ COM(2012)0473
- having regard to its resolution of 2 July 2013 on Blue Growth: enhancing sustainable growth in the EU’s marine, maritime transport and tourism sectors<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 February 2014 entitled ‘A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism’ COM(2014)0086),
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A8-0000/2015),

A. whereas coastal fishing accounts for 80% of the European fleet, guarantees a high level of employment in coastal areas, islands and the outermost regions, and represents a socially and environmentally sustainable form of fishing; whereas its influence on the social and cultural characteristics of coastal and island regions is exceptional and diverse;

B. whereas most coastal and island fishing constitutes a traditional form of fishing, i.e. a way of life and a significant source of livelihood, particularly in areas which depend on coastal fishing and which require special measures and support to facilitate growth and development;

C. whereas coastal fishing varies to a great degree between individual Member States in terms of its basic definition and characteristics – coastal and small-scale coastal fishing is a traditional form of fishing – and significant socio-economic divergences exist between the Member States;

D. whereas the characteristics of coastal fishing in enclosed seas, such as the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea as a whole, differ from those of the open seas of the Atlantic Ocean;

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0291

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0300

E. whereas coastal fishing should be made subject to management at local level which would take account of the diversity of the fleets, gears, techniques and fish stocks in individual Member States and in every individual fishing zone;

F. whereas mainly traditional gears and techniques, which by virtue of their specific characteristics define the identity and way of life of coastal regions, are used in coastal fishing, and it is vital to preserve their use and protect them as an element of cultural, historical and traditional heritage;

G. whereas the impossibility of using specific gears and techniques – which are more environmentally friendly and which do not have a significant impact on the status of endangered stocks – has a serious effect on the viability of already marginalised coastal and island communities causes increased depopulation and hinders development and innovation;

H. whereas according to the Mediterranean Regulation, the classification of towed gears also includes trawl nets and seine nets, even though all classifications – such as the FAO classification – consider seine nets to be a separate group of fishing gears; whereas provisions relating to towed trawl nets should not be applied to traditional coastal seine nets, which are used to catch species that are not endangered;

I. whereas the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) acknowledges the importance of fishing-dependent coastal and island regions, and some of the main objectives of the CFP are to ensure an adequate standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities, to contribute to the attainment of such a standard in the context of coastal fishing, and to promote sustainable coastal fishing while taking into account socio-economic factors;

J. whereas the new Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy gives preferential access to small-scale, coastal and traditional fishermen within a zone extending for 12 nautical miles, i.e. in the most sensitive part of the EU's waters;

K. whereas Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that, when adopting measures – especially measures relating to the fisheries sector – the special characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions must be taken into account;

L. whereas the majority of coastal and island regions are facing a significant economic decline which is resulting in depopulation and the exodus of their inhabitants, who seek opportunities in areas offering better prospects for employment and education;

M. whereas some coastal fishing regions are located close to economically developed regions and tourist destinations but are nonetheless unable to achieve adequate economic growth; whereas the pressure to use the sea's resources is already growing in such regions, and the fisheries sector is being marginalised in favour of tourism;

N. whereas the founding of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in areas which rely on fishing is vital, as such groups are recognised as a useful instrument that provides opportunities and possibilities for the diversification of activities in fisheries, which ultimately leads to the general development of coastal and island regions;

O. whereas the economic crisis is also making itself felt in the fisheries sector, diversification and innovation are necessary in order to increase employment, to take advantage of new possibilities such as blue and green development, and to prevent the marginalisation of fisheries in developing regions;

P. whereas diversification in coastal and island regions may be carried out through activities related to the marketing and promotion of fish products, tourism, cultural, historic and traditional heritage, the environment and green growth;

Q. whereas the blue economy is developing thanks to the EU's 'Innovation Union' initiative, the main objective of which is to create the preconditions for the promotion and development of innovation, and thanks to the Horizon 2020 programme, which is the EU's largest programme for research and innovation;

R. whereas the EU's 'Innovation Union' initiative acknowledged and identified shortcomings that restrict and prevent the development of research and innovation, such as inadequate investment in science, the lack of adequate data on seas and oceans, insufficient funding and a lack of cooperation between the private and public sectors;

S. whereas the development of the blue economy would contribute to economic growth overall – and particularly in coastal, island and outermost regions – and it is precisely the regions that depend on fisheries that have a key role to play in the development of innovations and that should be involved at every phase of the development of the blue economy;

T. whereas in the fisheries sector, more than in other sectors, the environment and the economy go hand in hand; whereas the blue development of the economy should be focused on sustainable and environmentally friendly projects and activities aimed at preserving the maritime environment and biodiversity as a whole;

U. whereas anthropogenic influences, i.e. human activities, in coastal regions have been underestimated in the context of environmental protection issues; whereas the cumulative effects of various activities on narrow coastal regions have not been adequately recognised or assessed; whereas activities that take place in coastal areas, such as maritime transport, tourism, waste water from the mainland, etc., particularly affect the fisheries sector;

V. whereas knowledge of the marine environment, specifically of the state of the marine ecosystem, is vital for assessing the impact of various activities on the environment, as is the laying down of suitable protection measures and monitoring programmes with the goal of promoting the recovery of fish stocks, the sustainable use of resources and the development of innovations; whereas data on the marine environment are inadequate, inaccessible and inadequately systematised;

1. Calls on the Commission to propose a suitable definition of coastal, small-scale coastal and traditional fishing that will be based more on the socio-economic characteristics and specificities of a specific region than on the dimensions and power of fishing vessels;

2. Calls on the Commission to support projects that facilitate the development of the coastal, island and outermost regions;

3. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the role of the European Fisheries Areas Network

(FARNET), which provides significant assistance to Fisheries Local Action Groups through the allocation of budgetary funds so that they can carry out their duties effectively;

4. Calls on the Commission to promote and support the founding of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), which contribute to innovation and diversification;

5. Calls on the Commission to promote and support investment in the diversification of the fisheries sector through the development of complementary activities, including investments in vessels, environmental services in the fisheries sector, cultural and educational activities in the fisheries sector, and to promote and support the diversification of fisheries with a view to protecting the environment and ensuring green growth;

6. Calls on the Commission to promote and support investments in fisheries in the area of tourism, which represents a growing economic sector with great potential for fisheries, in order to add to tourism capacities by promoting fish products, gastronomy, angling tourism, underwater and diving tourism, etc., and by presenting them as part of the traditional menu, thereby capitalising on fishing heritage and the recognisability of a specific fishing region;

7. Calls on the Commission to actively promote and support investment in the diversification of fisheries in the area of culture and art as part of traditional heritage (handicrafts, music and dance) and to support investment in the promotion of tradition, history and fishing heritage in general (fishing gears, techniques, historical documents, etc.) by opening museums and organising exhibitions that relate closely to coastal fishing;

8. Calls for the results of research and projects financed from the public budget to be made publicly available, for more effective access to existing data on seas and oceans to be ensured, and for the current administrative barriers hindering growth and the development of innovation to be removed;

9. Calls on the Commission to actively promote and support investment in the diversification of fisheries in terms of the marketing and processing of local fish products;

10. Calls on the Commission to guarantee access to data on seas and oceans with a view to promoting innovation and development;

11. Expresses concern at and opposition to the reduction in budgetary funds for the Horizon 2020 programme, which is the main programme for research and the development of innovation;

12. Calls on the Commission to provide at least 40% of the support as part of initiatives for the direct management of project financing, in which emphasis is placed on coastal fisheries and the development of coastal regions;

13. Stresses the importance of environmental protection instruments, such as Environmental Impact Assessments for individual projects and Strategic Environmental Assessments for strategies, plans and programmes, which contribute to sustainable fisheries;

14. Stresses that coastal and island regions, as well as the outermost regions, are the main actors in the development of innovation and that they must be involved at every stage of the

development of the blue economy;

15. Stresses the importance of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which has a particular focus on diversification and innovation in the fisheries sector, with a view to supporting fisheries which are environmentally sustainable, innovative, competitive, effective and knowledge-based;

16. Calls on the Commission to actively promote projects which offer support for the strengthening of innovation and technological development, the objective of which is the development or introduction of new products, equipment, techniques, as well as new or improved systems for management and organisation;

17. Expresses concern at and opposition to the non-selective approach being taken, consisting of banning the use in the Mediterranean region of traditional gears and techniques (e.g. banning the use of gillnets outside of the category of commercial fishing), which form part of the local inhabitants' traditions and way of life, are more environmentally friendly, and do not have a significant impact on the status of endangered stocks; feels that a non-selective approach to the use of gears and techniques is having a serious impact on the viability of already marginalised coastal and island communities, causing further depopulation and hindering development and innovation;

18. Calls on the Commission, in accordance with the expert classification of fishing gears set out in the Mediterranean Regulation, to distinguish between trawl nets and seine nets, since the provisions governing trawl nets can in no way be applied to traditional coastal seine nets, which are intended for use in fishing for non-endangered species;

19. Calls on the Commission to ensure that a review of the assessment of the status of fish stocks as regards coastal fisheries is carried out, and stresses the need for an analysis of small-scale fishing's impact on fish stocks, given that the species fished in coastal fisheries are mainly of little economic significance and account for a small proportion of commercial fishing;

20. Stresses the need for an amendment to the Regulation concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, also known as the 'Mediterranean Regulation', which was adopted in 2006 and which lays down rules on the technical characteristics of gears and their uses; feels that this regulation must be brought into line with the new CFP;

21. Calls on the Commission to promote projects that will make a contribution to protecting coastal and island areas as traditional, cultural and historic heritage areas;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Coastal fishing is an exceptionally important form of fishing in EU countries. It is especially important in that it guarantees a high level of employment and is a socially and environmentally sustainable form of fishing.

Coastal fishing is classified and defined differently in individual Member States (coastal, traditional or artisanal fishing, etc.). For most coastal and island areas, coastal fishing is a traditional form of fishing that forms a way of life and a significant source of livelihood. Areas which depend on coastal fisheries require specific measures and support in order to grow and develop.

The 2013 Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) placed emphasis on economic growth in coastal areas. It acknowledged the importance of island areas on open seas which depend of fishing and which need to be supported in order that they might survive and have opportunities to develop. It gives preferential access to small-scale and traditional fisheries within a zone extending for 12 nautical miles, thus in the most sensitive part of the EU's waters.

The 2014 Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) also particularly emphasises small-scale coastal fisheries. The provisions of the EMFF particularly emphasise the importance of diversification and innovation in the fisheries sector. Furthermore, the EMFF can support investments in the diversification and make a positive difference to fishermen's revenues through the development of complementary activities, including investments in vessels, restaurants, environmental services in the fisheries sector, cultural and educational activities in the fisheries sector, angling tourism, etc.

The Innovation Union flagship initiative is fundamental to the development of the blue economy. Horizon 2020, with a value of approximately EUR 79 billion, is the largest research and innovation programme. Besides this, some funds from EU investment and structural funds have been earmarked for innovation.

In order to facilitate the development of innovation, it is necessary to resolve acknowledged shortcomings, such as: inadequate investment in science, the lack of data on seas and oceans, insufficient funding, a lack of cooperation between the private and public sectors, etc.

In recent years, more has been invested in systems for monitoring the seas and oceans, but it is still insufficient. Moreover, a fundamental problem is the unavailability of existing data. The procedure for seeking and obtaining appropriate permission to use data alone is time-consuming and requires additional funds. All of the foregoing place significant restrictions on the development of innovation and the use of the aforementioned resources.

The main reasons why it is necessary to pursue diversification in the fisheries sector are as follows: the decline in employment in and profitability of the sector; countering the marginalisation of the fisheries sector in developing regions; and opportunities to benefit from new possibilities, such as 'green' development, etc.

Some coastal and island regions are facing a significant economic decline, which is resulting in depopulation and the exodus of their inhabitants, who seek opportunities in areas offering better prospects for employment and education. Furthermore, some coastal fishing regions are located close to economically developed regions (e.g. attractive cities or tourist destinations) but are nonetheless unable to achieve adequate economic growth. It is precisely in such areas where the pressure in terms of using the sea's resources is growing, and the fisheries sector is being marginalised in favour of tourism.

Tourism is a growing branch of the economy and, as such, it has great potential as regards the diversification of the fisheries sector. The tourist sector could make use of the fisheries sector (fish products, restaurants, accommodation, angling tourism) by presenting fishery products as part of the traditional menu, thereby capitalising on fishing heritage and the recognisability of a specific fishing region. In addition to tourism, cultural and artistic activities could play an important role in the diversification of the fisheries sector. Cultural values are also part of traditional heritage (handicrafts, music and dance) and can be drawn upon in the diversification of the fisheries sector. Promoting tradition, history and fishing heritage in general (fishing gears, vessels, techniques, historical documents, etc.) in a given area can be done by opening museums and organising exhibitions that relate closely to the sector. Furthermore, underwater tourism or diving tourism are also ways of promoting a given area.

In fisheries, more than in other sectors, the environment and the economy go hand in hand. As regards the possibility of diversifying the fisheries sector in the area of the environment and the 'green' economy, the role of activities related to renewable sources of energy, environmental protection, etc. must be emphasised.

We must be aware of all of the problems that coastal fisheries face, particularly as regards the prescribed selection of gears and techniques (e.g. banning the use of gillnets outside of the category of commercial fishing) when such gears and techniques form part of the local inhabitants' traditions and way of life. If we are to protect coastal fisheries, a procedure to amend the existing legislation must be launched.

Since we have a new CFP, we need to have a new framework and to launch a procedure to amend the Regulation concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, also known as the 'Mediterranean Regulation', which was adopted in 2006 and which lays down rules on the technical characteristics of gears and their uses, in order to bring it into line with the new CFP and with the needs of coastal fisheries.