

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



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*Committee on Regional Development*

**2004/0169(CNS)**

25.4.2005

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a Council regulation on the European Fisheries Fund  
(COM(2004)0497 – C6-0212/2004 – 2004/0169(CNS))

Draftsman: Jim Higgins

PA\_Leg

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The proposal establishes a new European Fisheries Fund (EFF) for the period 2007-2013. The EFF replaces the current Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). EU funding for the EFF will amount to about 0,7 billion EURO per year for 2007-2013. Three-quarters of this budget will be allocated to the regions lagging most behind.

The proposal brings EU funding for the fisheries sector in line with the on-going reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), agreed by the Council in December 2002. The new fund intends to help implementing the major changes under this reform such as reducing fishing pressure, in order to allow recovery of fish stocks and diversifying economic activities in fishing areas.

The European Fisheries Fund will be in line with the new approach guiding EU funding, which simplifies the programming and assistance mechanisms. The Community will establish strategic guidelines, which serve as a framework for the preparation and implementation of the Fund.

The main principles guiding the fund will remain unchanged: multi-annual programming, partnership, co-financing, subsidiarity, proportionality and shared management.

The new EFF sets four main objectives, also called priority axes:

1. Adjustment of fishing effort and better protection for the marine environment
2. Aquaculture, processing and marketing
3. Promoting collective interests such as measures intended to protect the aquatic fauna, fishing ports and development of new markets
4. Sustainable development of coastal fishing areas

It is up to the Member States to decide which mix of measures suits their regions best.

### **Draftman's remarks**

The Committee on Regional Development welcomes the proposal, since it strengthens its links with Regional Policy and is likely to make an increased contribution to cohesion.

Coastal regions with fishing activities suffer from territorial disadvantages, since they are often located in the periphery. This has a negative impact on their economic development, in particular when it comes to diversifying economic activities. The four priorities of the fund, in particular measures of collective interest and sustainable development of coastal fishing areas, will make a contribution to improving the economic situation of coastal fishing areas.

### ***Importance of measures for diversification***

The overriding concern of the EFF, as well as for every other EU policy, must be the

provision of sustainable jobs. Diversification of economic activities in those areas is heavily needed following an average loss of 8.000 jobs a year in the EU catching sector. Priority axis 4 ("Sustainable development of coastal fishing areas") is mainly directed towards diversification of economic activities.

The promotion of multiple employment for people actively employed in the fisheries sector through the creation of additional or replacement jobs outside the fisheries sector should be given more emphasis in the proposal.

### ***"Sustainable development of coastal fishing areas" key for complementing Regional Policy***

Not only is axis 4 best suited to providing a stimulus for sustainable employment opportunities outside the fisheries sector, it also plays an important role in complementing Regional Policy.

The new EFF, in particular axis 4, can provide the stimulus needed to maintain economic viability of coastal areas, in particular those over-reliant on fisheries economies, which are smaller than NUTS III. These areas are too small to be precisely targeted by cohesion policy and suffer persistent disadvantage due to a lack of commitment to cohesion at national level.

### ***Securing sufficient resources for "Sustainable development of coastal fishing areas"***

Given the outermost importance of the priority programming axis 4 for cohesion and sustainable employment, the proposal should set minimum amounts designated for each of the four different priority axes. Even though it is necessary to leave sufficient flexibility to Member States to decide which measures match best their needs, the EU should ensure that no programming axis, in particular priority axis 4, would be neglected.

Setting a minimum programme funding for the axis 4, and eventually for all the different programming priorities, would increase coherence with the proposal for a European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, which sets minimum programme funding for each priority.

### ***A strict budgetary minimum rather than sufficient resources***

Furthermore, the proposal does not foresee any increase in expenditure for fisheries funding for 2007-2013. The increase from 4 billion EURO to 4.9 billion EURO for a programming period of 7 years is a pure extrapolation of the budget allocated to fisheries within a smaller Union of 15 Member States.

This amount should be considered as the strict minimum necessary, in order to ensure that the EFF will make a positive contribution to cohesion, given that the new Fisheries Policy to fight depletion of stocks will demand important adjustments from the coastal regions dependent on fisheries economies.

## **AMENDMENTS**

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the

committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Text proposed by the Commission<sup>1</sup>

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Amendments by Parliament

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Amendment 1  
Recital 9

(9) The activity of the Fund and the operations it helps finance should be compatible with the other Community policies and comply with Community legislation;

(9) The activity of the Fund and the operations it helps finance should be compatible with the other Community policies, ***complementing in particular regional policy***, and comply with Community legislation;

*Justification*

The European Fisheries Fund plays an important role in complementing Regional Policy at a micro level in areas disadvantaged due to their peripheral situation.

Amendment 2  
Recital 10

(10) Action by the Community should be complementary to that carried out by the Member *states* or seek to contribute to it and in order to ensure significant added value, partnership should be strengthened. This concerns the regional and local authorities, the other competent authorities, including those responsible for the environment and for the promotion of equality between men and women, the economic and social partners and other competent bodies. The partners concerned should be involved in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of assistance;

(10) Action by the Community should be complementary to that carried out by the Member *States* or seek to contribute to it, and, in order to ensure significant added value, partnership should be strengthened. This concerns the regional and local authorities, the other competent authorities, including those responsible for the environment and for the promotion of ***non-discrimination including*** equality between men and women, the economic and social partners and other competent bodies. The partners concerned should be involved in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of assistance;

Amendment 3  
Recital 24

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet published in OJ.

(24) The need to provide accompanying measures for CFP, in particular, reducing its socio-economic impact by implementing a coastal zone development policy;

(24) The need to provide accompanying measures for CFP, in particular, reducing its socio-economic impact by implementing a coastal zone development policy ***with the aim of diversifying economic activities and providing sustainable employment;***

*Justification*

The overriding concern of the EFF must be the provision of sustainable jobs and support for diversification of economic activities.

Amendment 4  
Article 1

This Regulation establishes a European Fisheries Fund (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Fund’) and defines the framework for Community support for the sustainable development of the fisheries sector and coastal fisheries zones.

This Regulation establishes a European Fisheries Fund (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Fund’) and defines the framework for Community support for the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, ***aquaculture*** and coastal fisheries zones.

*Justification*

*I suggest that financial support from the EC also cover aquaculture, which is important for the successful management of aquatic areas.*

Amendment 5  
Article 3 (e)

(e) “aquaculture” means the rearing or cultivation of aquatic organisms using techniques designed to increase the production of the organisms in question beyond the natural capacity of the environment; the organisms remain the property of a natural or legal person throughout the rearing or culture stage, up to and including harvesting

(e) “aquaculture” means the rearing or cultivation of aquatic organisms using techniques designed to increase the production of the organisms in question beyond the natural capacity of the environment; ***which should be supported only in so far as it is not detrimental to the environment;*** the organisms remain the property of a natural or legal person throughout the rearing or culture stage, up to and including harvesting

Amendment 6

Article 18 a (new)

**Article 18a**

***The Community financial contribution to priority axis 4 referred to in Title IV, Chapter IV, and in particular to the eligible measure referred to in Article 43, shall cover at least 25% of the Fund's total contribution to each national programme.***

*Justification*

*Given the outermost importance of the priority programming axis 4 for cohesion and sustainable employment, a minimum funding for this axis should be ensured.*

Amendment 7

Article 20, paragraph 1

1. Each Member State shall draw up an operational programme at national level following close consultation with the partners. It shall be transmitted to the Commission within three months following the adoption by the Member State of its national strategic plan.

1. Each Member State shall draw up, ***in accordance with its institutional structure***, an operational programme at national level following close consultation with the partners. It shall be transmitted to the Commission within three months following the adoption by the Member State of its national strategic plan.

*Justification*

*The regulation should take into account that in some federal or regionalised Member States the competence on fisheries policy is devolved and does not reside exclusively (e.g. the UK) or not at all (e.g. Belgium) in the central government.*

Amendment 8

Article 30, paragraph 2

2. Investment aid shall be reserved for micro ***and*** small businesses.

2. Investment aid shall be reserved for micro, small ***and medium-sized*** businesses.

*Justification*

*Since many fisheries enterprises having difficulties solving economic problems on their own come under the category of medium-sized enterprises, I suggest that they, too, have the possibility of obtaining financial support.*

Amendment 9  
Article 33, paragraph 1

1. The Fund may support, under the specific strategies to be included in the national strategic plans, investments in processing for direct human consumption and in the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products. This aid is restricted to micro **and** small enterprises.

1. The Fund may support, under the specific strategies to be included in the national strategic plans, investments in processing for direct human consumption and in the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products. This aid is restricted to micro, small **and medium-sized** enterprises.

*Justification*

*Since many fisheries enterprises having difficulties solving economic problems on their own come under the category of medium-sized enterprises, I suggest that they, too, have the possibility of obtaining financial support.*

Amendment 10  
Article 37, paragraph 1

1. The Fund may assist actions of collective interest intended to protect and develop aquatic fauna, excluding direct restocking. The actions must contribute to enhancing the aquatic environment.

1. The Fund may assist actions of collective interest intended to protect and develop aquatic fauna, excluding direct restocking **except for restocking in inland waters for the purpose of reintroducing or supporting highly migratory fish.** The actions must contribute to enhancing the aquatic environment.

*Justification*

*Reintegration of migratory fish, such as strokes and salmon, does not consist only in preservation of the clearness of the inland water network but also in direct reintegration. The measures of direct reintegration are necessary for the preservation of highly migratory fish.*

Amendment 11  
Article 42, paragraph 3, subparagraph 3

The area should have low population density shall, a significant level of employment in the fisheries sector, fishing shall be in decline, **and there shall be no municipality with more than 100 000 inhabitants.**

The area should have low population density, shall **have** a significant level of employment in the fisheries sector **and** fishing shall be in decline.



### *Justification*

*Article 42 concerns the scope of assistance for the sustainable development of coastal fishing areas, the key criteria for which are a significant level of employment in the fisheries sector and the level of decline of that sector locally. An arbitrary limit on the number of inhabitants in a municipality included in an area is not a relevant criterion.*

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Proposal for a Council regulation on the European Fisheries Fund
<b>References</b>	COM(2004)0497 – C6-0212/2004 – 2004/0169(CNS)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	PECH
<b>Committee asked for its opinion</b> Date announced in plenary	REGI 14.12.2004
<b>Enhanced cooperation</b>	
<b>Draftsman</b> Date appointed	Jim Higgins 6.10.2004
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	15.3.2005
<b>Date amendments adopted</b>	21.4.2005
<b>Result of final vote</b>	for: 39 against: 0 abstentions: 5
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Adam Jerzy Bielan, Jana Bobošíková, Bairbre de Brún, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Ambroise Guellec, Pedro Guerreiro, Zita Gurmai, Gábor Harangozó, Marian Harkin, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Jim Higgins, Alain Hutchinson, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Sérgio Marques, Yiannakis Matsis, Miroslav Mikolášik, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, István Pálfi, Markus Pieper, , Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Bernard Poignant, Elisabeth Schroedter, Alyn Smith, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Oldřich Vlasák
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Alfredo Antoniozzi, Ole Christensen, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Bastiaan Belder, Mirosław Mariusz Piotrowski
<b>Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	