

P5_TA(2003)0088

Socio-economic crisis in the whitefish sector

European Parliament resolution on the socio-economic crisis in the whitefish sector

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas the adoption of measures to manage fisheries resources shall take into account previous studies on the socio-economic consequences for the fishing industry,
 - B. whereas its resolution of 5 December 2002 on the cod crisis¹ warned of the massive socio-economic consequences of stringent cod conservation measures,
 - C. whereas scientists from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea consider several stocks of cod in EU waters to be at critically low levels,
 - D. whereas the abovementioned resolution pointed out that insufficient funds are available in the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) as currently programmed in the EU budget to compensate communities devastated by such measures,
 - E. whereas the Council of Agriculture Ministers at their meeting in December 2002 decided, nevertheless, to adopt proposals for short-term measures which will have a drastic impact on jobs in the EU whitefish sector,
1. Calls upon the budgetary authority of the EU and the Commission jointly with the Member States concerned to draw up a plan to compensate for losses incurred by coastal communities as a result of the cod conservation measures, and to allocate up to EUR 150 million of additional EU funding, acknowledging the contributions that Member States are making to tackle the crisis;
 2. Considers that the additional funding requested is compatible with the ceiling of heading 2 of the Financial Perspective, but entails a reprogramming of existing policies to be agreed by the budgetary authority, or recourse to the provisions of the interinstitutional agreement of 6 May 1999²;
 3. Calls on the Commission to present a proposal to this effect with the appropriate legal basis by 30 June 2003;
 4. Calls upon the Commission and the Council to ensure that any changes made to the current conservation measures for cod are designed to maximise the probability of a recovery of the cod stocks and do not have the effect of furthering their decline;

¹ P5_TA(2002)0593.

² OJ C 172, 18.6.1999, p. 1.

5. Calls upon the Commission and the Council to adopt more sophisticated long-term conservation measures which, while offering the prospect of cod recovery, would also secure the maximum number of jobs in the EU whitefish sector;
6. Calls upon the Commission quickly to establish Regional Management Committees that would optimise stakeholder involvement without undermining European Treaties;
7. Calls upon the Commission and the Council to bring together scientists and fishermen on a regular basis and increase the breadth and depth of scientific assessment and analysis in EU fisheries;
8. Calls upon the Council and the Commission to support the extension of co-decision-making powers to the field of fisheries;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.