

P7_TA(2013)0403

Fisheries restrictions and jurisdictional waters in the Mediterranean and Black Sea – conflict resolution

European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2013 on fisheries restrictions and jurisdictional waters in the Mediterranean and Black Sea – ways for conflict resolution (2011/2086(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS),
- having regard to the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks,
- having regard to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) code of conduct for responsible fisheries, adopted in October 1995 by the FAO Conference,
- having regard to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, signed in Bucharest in April 1992,
- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, signed in Barcelona in February 1976 and amended in Barcelona in June 1995,
- having regard to the Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea, adopted in Sofia in April 2009,
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)¹,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management (COM(2013)0133),
- having regard to [Part VII on External Policy] of Regulation (EU) No [...]/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of [...] on the Common Fisheries Policy,²
- having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2011 on an EU strategy for the Black Sea³,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2011 on current and future management of Black Sea fisheries⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the external dimension of the common fisheries policy¹,

¹ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p.19.

² See Council doc. No...

³ OJ C 136 E, 11.5.2012, p. 81.

⁴ OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 37.

- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 10 October 2007 entitled ‘An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union’ (COM(2007)0575),
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 October 2010 on an Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) – Evaluation of progress made and new challenges²,
 - having regard to the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament of 11 September 2009 entitled ‘Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean’ (COM(2009)0466),
 - having regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy and related funding Instruments;
 - having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament and the Council of 8 September 2010 entitled ‘Marine Knowledge 2020 – Marine data and observation for smart and sustainable growth’ (COM(2010)0461),
 - having regard to the ENPI Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme for cross-border cooperation 2007–2013, adopted by the Commission on 14 August 2008,
 - having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 13 September 2012 entitled ‘Blue growth – Opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth’ (COM(2012)0494),
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A7-0288/2013),
- A. whereas by 2025 urban development in the Mediterranean may reach a level of 60 %, with a third of the population concentrated in coastal areas, thus doubling the demand on water and on fishing resources;
- B. whereas the Mediterranean Sea carries 30 % of the world’s maritime traffic;
- C. whereas the Mediterranean and the Black Sea have specific characteristics from an oceanographic, fisheries, environmental and socio-economic perspective;
- D. whereas the management of maritime and coastal areas is complex and involves various private and public authorities;
- E. whereas the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins have a very low water renewal rate (80-90 years and 140 years respectively) and are therefore extremely sensitive to marine pollution;
- F. whereas approximately 75 % of the fish stocks of the Mediterranean Sea are overexploited;
- G. whereas legal regimes governing access by vessels to national fisheries vary according to the nationality of the vessel;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0461.

² OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 70.

1. Expresses its concern over greater competition for fewer stocks and marine resources, leading to the creation of regional tensions and possible disputes between coastal states about maritime areas; calls, in that context, for increased efforts at regional, national, and EU levels towards enhancing the regulation of access to resources;
2. Urges all littoral states to intensify their efforts to phase out overfishing in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, as dwindling fish stocks will increase the potential for conflicts in this area;
3. Strongly believes that the peaceful settlement of disputes concerning maritime areas and the delimitation of maritime boundaries, in conformity with the rights and obligations of Member States and third countries under EU and international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, is an essential element of good governance of the oceans;
4. Believes that marine management in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea requires a greater degree of political cohesion and cooperation among the coastal states concerned; underlines the important role of bilateral cooperation and international agreements, given that the majority of the Black Sea and Mediterranean countries are not EU Member States and hence not subject to EU legislation;
5. Welcomes the Commission's role in promoting a more solid and structured dialogue with non-Member States bordering the Mediterranean and the Black Sea for the management of shared stocks in these basins; encourages the Commission to intensify its efforts to this end following a regional approach;
6. Believes that marine management in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region presents opportunities for international relations and for effective governance of the region;
7. Emphasises that the competition for reduced levels of fish stocks and marine resources may become a source of friction with third countries; urges the EU and the Member States to work together to ensure the monitoring, control, security and safety of coastal and territorial waters, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), the continental shelf, and maritime infrastructure and marine resources; notes that the EU should maintain a high political profile in this respect and should seek to preclude international discord;
8. Urges the EU to use its diplomatic resources to promote dialogue between Member States and third countries, so as to ensure that they value the principles of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, and to monitor compliance with its rules; stresses that candidate countries to EU accession, in particular, should respect EU fisheries policy principles as well as the relevant EU and international laws applying to fishing activities;
9. Notes that of the 21 Mediterranean states, three have neither signed nor ratified the UNCLOS; asks the Commission to urge these countries, in particular candidate countries for EU accession, to become parties to the convention and to implement UNCLOS as an integral part of the EU regulatory framework for maritime affairs;
10. Calls on the Commission and third countries to develop a regional approach to fish conservation and fishing in Mediterranean and Black Sea waters, taking into account the cross-border dimension of fishing and the migratory nature of some species; stresses, in this regard, the significant role of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in ensuring a level playing field and as a regional forum for ensuring sustainable fisheries in the Black Sea;
11. Emphasises the need for environmental protection and sustainable development in these basins, and for enhanced efforts towards marine governance and control, in accordance with

international law – in particular UNCLOS – as a means of contributing to enhanced environmental protection of coastal and marine space;

12. Believes that an Integrated Maritime Policy, and in particular maritime spatial planning, can play a central role in preventing conflicts between EU Member States as well as with third countries;
13. Encourages the Member States to introduce integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning – as regards offshore wind power generation, the laying of underwater cables and pipelines, maritime transport, fisheries and aquaculture and the creation of restocking areas – under the Blue Growth strategy and within the framework of existing agreements with neighbouring countries, including third countries, that lie on the same regional sea;
14. Encourages the establishment of maritime zones, in particular exclusive economic zones and protected maritime areas, which will not only improve fisheries conservation and management beyond territorial waters but will also promote sustainable fisheries resources, facilitate the control of and fight against IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, as well as improve marine management within these basins; stresses the need for the EU to provide adequate guidance, coordination and support to Member States in this respect;
15. Calls on the Commission to consider these issues further in view of ensuring the coherence of relevant EU policy areas, in particular the Common Fisheries Policy and the Integrated Maritime Policy, and to promote this coherence – and a level playing field – both within the EU and with neighbouring partner countries, through enhanced cooperation and dialogue;
16. Stresses the importance of stock assessments, and calls for enhanced cooperation among scientific institutes in both basins, including the exchange of scientific data and the sharing of information; believes that the EU should promote, stimulate and facilitate cooperation and joint work between EU scientific teams and their counterparts in other involved non-Member States; welcomes, in this respect, the ‘Marine Knowledge 2020’ initiative, which aims to make data on the marine environment available to a large number of potentially interested parties, including public, industrial, educational and research bodies and civil society;
17. Calls for an enhanced system of monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activity within an integrated perspective to enhance ecosystem conservation in both basins, in accordance with EU and international law, in particular UNCLOS, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainable exploitation of fish stocks and to combating IUU fishing in a more effective way;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.