

Simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy (2006-2008)

European Parliament resolution on the 2006-2008 Action Plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy (2006/2053(INI)) (06.09.2006)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled ‘2006-2008 Action Plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2005)0647),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Perspectives for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment of the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2004)0820) and the Commission staff working document entitled ‘Analysis of the possibilities of simplification and improvement of the regulatory environment of the Common Fisheries Policy and of its implementation’ (SEC(2004)1596),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: a strategy for the simplification of the regulatory environment’ (COM(2005)0535),
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 April 2005 concerning the Commission Communication entitled ‘Perspectives for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment of the Common Fisheries Policy’ (8077/2005),
 - having regard to the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making which was concluded on 16 December 2003 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission¹,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A6-0228/2006),
- A. whereas improving and simplifying the legislative environment with a view to making it more efficient and transparent is a priority task for the European Union which will benefit ordinary people and help to increase competitiveness, growth and sustainable development, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives,
- B. whereas administrative bodies in the Member States and those who work in the fisheries sector deplore the dispersal and the juxtaposition of measures, the lack of clarity and accessibility in the case of existing texts and the difficulties stemming from the administrative burden created by a multitude of requirements, some of which are superfluous,
- C. whereas the task of simplifying the rules governing the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) calls for the extensive involvement of fishermen and of the other parties concerned,
- D. whereas the fishing industry must be consulted within deadlines which will allow its

¹ OJ C 321, 31.12.2003, p. 1.

effective participation and upstream involvement in the decision-making process,

- E. whereas the effectiveness of the CFP is closely linked to the introduction of a harmonised inspection and monitoring system applicable to all who work in the fisheries sector,
1. Warmly welcomes this sectoral action plan designed to simplify and improve the CFP;
 2. Fully supports the objectives established by the Commission, in particular those concerned with making existing texts simpler, clearer and more accessible, reducing the workload and the administrative costs shouldered by the administrative bodies responsible for fisheries, and reducing the burdens and the restrictions imposed on fishermen;
 3. Welcomes the methodology proposed by the Commission, in particular the drawing up of a three-year action plan covering the 2006-2008 period;
 4. Agrees with the Commission's view that simplification efforts must focus on conservation policy and the monitoring of fishing activities;
 5. Considers that there must genuinely be more extensive pre-legislative consultation of all the parties affected by the measures envisaged and that such consultation should be carried out as far as possible at an early stage, in order to enable the interested parties to make an effective contribution to the preparatory work prior to any legislative proposal;
 6. Considers that all legislative proposals must be preceded by impact analyses and that the latter must be based on accurate, objective and comprehensive information and must be made public at the appropriate time;
 7. Considers that there must be an adequate period of time between the date of adoption and the date of implementation of any new rules, in order to enable the parties concerned to adapt;
 8. Considers that regulatory texts must be drawn up more precisely and in a way that can be understood by stakeholders;
 9. Considers that assessments concerning the effectiveness and the implementation of the measures adopted must be carried out systematically on the basis of objective and clearly defined indicators;
 10. Insists that the advisory bodies (in particular the Regional Advisory Councils and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture) must play an integral role in the process of simplification and of assessing the effectiveness and implementation of existing and new measures; considers that closer consultation with these bodies would undoubtedly result in those involved in the fisheries sector identifying more closely with fisheries legislation;
 11. Considers that the legal structure of the provisions relating to technical measures, to fisheries management measures, to monitoring measures and to catch limits must be revised with a particular view to clarifying texts, making them more consistent and easier to read, deleting obsolete provisions and both condensing and consolidating the provisions relating to each aspect of the CFP;

12. Supports the simplification guidelines set out in the action plan for regulating the total allowable catches (TACs)/quotas and the fishing effort, in particular the separate treatment of the various existing components, the targeting of decisions at uniform groups and the development of multiannual approaches;
13. Welcomes the Commission's intention to reform existing legislation by gradually bringing together technical measures relating to each fishery, whilst at the same time clarifying the provisions in force and ensuring that the rules as a whole are more consistent and better coordinated;
14. Rejects the possibility outlined by the Commission of submitting a 'short' regulation on technical measures to the Council, which would be followed by detailed Commission regulations, since such vital aspects as the body of technical measures by which the Community fleet is to be governed cannot be removed from debate and approval by the European Parliament and the Council;
15. Takes the view that special attention should be paid to the possibility whereby the Member States may be authorised to adopt certain locally applicable technical measures; considers that, with a view to preventing such arrangements from having an adverse environmental impact, the use thereof should be periodically assessed;
16. Notes that Article 9 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy¹ already permits Member States to adopt non-discriminatory measures for the conservation and management of fisheries resources and to minimise the effect of fishing on the conservation of marine eco-systems within 12 nautical miles of their baselines; urges that the Commission proceed cautiously with any extension of this principle, as an authorisation to adopt certain locally applicable technical measures could result in the emergence of discriminatory conditions in the Member States concerned;
17. Approves of the development on a case-by-case basis of targeted approaches for individual regions or individual fisheries, duly based on scientific resource-protection criteria and thorough socio-economic impact analyses, and considers that all the parties concerned should be closely involved in the development of such approaches;
18. Considers that the recovery and management plans proposed by the Commission as part of the CFP need to be made flexible in line with the actual circumstances for fishing in the various Member States;
19. Approves of the increased use of computers, of information technologies and of automation in order to facilitate access to Community legislation and to facilitate and rationalise the collection and the transfer of data intended both for administrators in the Member States and for people who work in the sector;
20. Considers that information on legislation must not be forwarded only through institutional channels but must also reach the interested parties directly, in particular through associations, Regional Advisory Councils, the Internet and the drafting of codes of conduct;

¹ OJ L 358, 31.12.2002, p. 59.

21. Considers that the use of new technologies on board fishing vessels should be increased gradually, with exemptions to be made in the case of the smallest vessels and with sufficiently long transition periods to be established in order to enable the sector to adapt;
22. Considers that Community aid should be granted for the development of the new technologies and for the specific training required;
23. Considers that the provisions concerning all aspects relating to the monitoring and surveillance of fishing activities must be consolidated and recast;
24. Calls upon the Commission to revise the Community provisions relating to minimum sizes with a view to harmonising them;
25. States once again that a harmonised inspection and monitoring system applicable to all who work in the sector and accompanied by a uniform set of interpretation provisions and penalty procedures should be established as a matter of urgency in order to bolster fishermen's trust in the basic principle of equal treatment; considers that the Community Fisheries Monitoring Agency should contribute to the achievement of this objective;
26. Welcomes the general principle concerning the rationalisation of the reporting requirements imposed on the Member States and on the sector but emphasises the crucial role played by certain Commission reports, in particular those which serve to monitor the implementation of the CFP;
27. Considers that the administration of authorisations outside Community waters (and of catch and effort data relating to such activities) should be clarified, improved and computerised, and welcomes the initiatives which the Commission has already undertaken in this area;
28. Agrees with the Commission that the complex and lengthy procedures applied by the European Union in order to transpose the provisions adopted by Regional Fisheries Organisations into Community legislation are completely undesirable, but takes the view that most of the complexity in transposition stems from excessive bureaucracy within the Commission itself and therefore categorically rejects the possibility that any simplification process should be carried out at the expense of robbing the European Parliament of its responsibilities as regards intervening in legislative procedures;
29. Calls, furthermore, upon the Commission to finalise a 'standard agreement' for the two main categories of fisheries partnership agreement (mixed and tuna) on the basis of which the rights and the obligations of the two parties (Community and third country) will be enshrined;
30. Considers that the process of negotiating and monitoring fisheries partnership agreements should be reworked and simplified as a matter of priority and welcomes the efforts which the Commission has recently made in this area;
31. Is willing to contribute actively to the effort required to implement the simplification process and calls for an on-going interinstitutional dialogue on better law-making in relation to the CFP;
32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.