

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Fisheries

2008/2223(INI)

18.12.2008

DRAFT REPORT

on Governance within the CFP: the European Parliament, the Regional
Advisory Councils and other actors
(2008/2223(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Elspeth Attwooll

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	7

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Governance within the CFP: the European Parliament, the Regional Advisory Councils and other actors (2008/2223(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy¹,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) 657/2000 of 27 March 2000 on closer dialogue with the fishing sector and groups affected by the common fisheries policy²,
 - having regard to Commission Decisions 71/128/EEC, 1999/478/EC and 2004/864/EC,
 - having regard to Commission Decision 93/619/EC, renewed in 2005 by Commission Decision 2005/629/EC,
 - having regard to Commission Decisions 74/441/EEC and 98/500/EC,
 - having regard to Council Decision 2004/585/EC of 19 July 2004 establishing Regional Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy³ as amended by Council Decision 2007/409/EC of 11 June 2007⁴,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the review of the functioning of the Regional Advisory Councils of 17 June 2008 (COM (2008)0364),
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A6-0000/2008),
- A. whereas institutional governance of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) involves the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee, the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA), the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF), the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries (SSDC) and the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs),
- B. whereas the governance of the CFP also involves the national and regional administrations of the Member States,

¹ OJ L 358, 31.12.2002, p. 59.

² OJ L 80, 31.3.2000, p. 7.

³ OJ L 256, 3.8.2004, p. 17.

⁴ OJ L 155, 15.6.2007, p. 68.

- C. whereas the Community participates in various Regional Fisheries Organisations and Fisheries Partnership Agreements are also concluded with third countries,
- D. whereas, under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament would continue to be excluded from the setting of TACs and quotas,
- E. whereas attendance of members of the European Parliament at meetings of Regional Fisheries Organisations is currently ad hoc,
- F. whereas communication concerning the actual operation of Fisheries Partnership agreements, including the activities of the Joint Monitoring Committees, could be more satisfactory,
- G. whereas STECF was established in 1993, an Advisory Committee for Fisheries in 1971 and renamed as AFCA in 1999 and a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries in 1999, replacing a Joint Committee existing since 1974,
- H. whereas all seven Regional Advisory Councils are now operational,
- I. whereas an Inter-RAC Committee has been established and has co-ordination meetings with the Commission,
- J. whereas the Commission has recently undertaken evaluations of AFCA and of the RACS but none so far of the work of STECF,
- K. whereas the evaluation of AFCA has made a number of operational recommendations and suggested various options for its long term future,
- L. whereas the evaluation of the RACs has been positive but the Commission has identified a number of actions, not requiring new legislation, to improve their functioning;
- M. whereas all parties are agreed that a stronger dialogue between scientists and fishermen is needed and the RACs have also called for better socio-economic input into decision-taking,
- N. whereas certain RACs and members of the European Parliament have expressed a desire for a more formalised relationship,
- O. whereas increasing activity on the part of the RACs is hampered by restricted funding,
- P. whereas the Commission has said that it will listen to the views of the European Parliament, the Council and the stakeholders before introducing new legal rules,
- Q. whereas there is, however, already evidence that increased compliance with the rules of the CFP results from the involvement of stakeholders in their creation and implementation,
- R. whereas there is a multiplicity of different Community fisheries, each with its own characteristics,

- S. whereas consultations are already taking place on the reform of the CFP,
1. Calls for members of its Fisheries Committee to be given observer status at meetings of the Council of Fisheries Ministers;
 2. Calls for a list of Regional Fisheries Organisations and other international bodies at which attendance by members of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries should be funded as routine by the Parliament;
 3. Calls for fuller information to be supplied about the operation of Fisheries Partnership Agreements and, in particular, the activities of the Joint Monitoring Committees;
 4. Calls on the Commission to notify the Parliament of all consultations that are taking place in relation to the CFP and maritime policy;
 5. Calls on the Commission to engage in an evaluation of STECF;
 6. Notes the outcome of the evaluation of AFCA and that the Commission is awaiting AFCA's own recommendations concerning:
 - a clearer definition of its role and objectives, with a representative composition adequately reflecting these and properly representative, and improved participation from the newer member states;
 - its working methods in terms of the division of activity between plenary meetings and working groups, their number and remit, and their procedures;
 - better formulation of the questions addressed to it;
 - improvement of communication and information through use of electronic media more direct access to data and improved facilities for translation and interpretation;
 - adequacy of funding and the best means of sustaining support functions.
 7. Notes that different options are suggested for AFCA's long term future: replacement by a RAC Coordinating Committee; reduction in size with representation solely from different segments of the fleet; trade and processing; fish and shellfish farming and port activities; increase in size, including recreational fisheries, retailers and coastal and marine users; merging AFCA into a wider Maritime Consultation Group;
 8. Stresses the importance of avoiding overlap, particularly with the work of RACS, and considers that the final option would fit well with maritime and marine policy, and integrated coastal zone management;
 9. Calls on the Commission to take the following actions in respect of RACS:
 - increase their visibility and encouraging participation by a wider range of stakeholders;
 - improve their access to scientific evidence and data and liaison with the STECF;
 - involve them as early as possible in the consultation process;
 - provide benchmarks to allow an assessment of the consistency of their advice with CFP objectives and to debrief them on the use made of it.

10. Considers that RACS are currently under-financed for the level of work that they are undertaking; notes that the Commission has issued guidelines concerning financial management but believes that further dialogue is necessary in this regard and that alternatives to the current system should be explored;
11. Believes that wider participation in RACs requires a review of their composition but that the current balance between the fishing industry and other organisations should not be disturbed;
12. Calls for closer links between the RACs and the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee;
13. Requests the Committee on Fisheries in the European Parliament, subject to the statutory approval procedures, to:
 - appoint member(s) of the Committee as a liaison for each RAC and to report on its activities;
 - ensure that RACs are invited to participate in the Fisheries Committee when the agenda covers matter on which they are involved in giving advice or making recommendations;
 - invite members of the Inter-RAC Committee to make a presentation to the Committee subsequent to its coordinating meetings with the Commission;
 - host an annual conference involving the RACs and the Commission.
14. Calls on the budgetary authorities to allocate adequate funding for the above;
15. Asks the RACs to keep members of the Fisheries Committee informed of their activities, advice and recommendations and to invite their attendance at meetings;
16. Calls for any future legislation on RACs to afford members of the European Parliament formal status as active observers at their meetings;
17. Asks the Commission and the Inter-RAC to agree to the attendance of members of the Fisheries Committee at their coordination meetings;
18. Believes that there should be progressive devolution of management responsibilities to RACs;
19. Believes also that the coming reform of the CFP should bring about its full decentralisation, with RACs as the core;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Regional Advisory Councils, the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries and the governments and parliaments in the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Institutional governance of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) involves, besides the Commission, Council and the Parliament, various bodies such as the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), the Advisory Council for Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA), the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries (SSDC) and the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee also have a role in providing opinions. The governance within the CFP also involves the national and regional administrations of the Member States.

The development of law and policy is also influenced by direct input from industrial stakeholders, either individually or through umbrella organisations such as COCEGA, Europêche and FEAP, from consumer organisations and from other NGOs, particularly those with an environmental interest, and, to a lesser extent, from the social partners.

The governance of the CFP has also to be seen in the context of wider developments, such as that of the integrated maritime policy and the marine strategy, the extension of Natura 2000 to the marine environment and moves toward integrated coastal zone management. In the latter context the CFP may have to balance the interests of capture fisheries with aquaculture, as well as take account of conflicting economic interests, such as energy production.

Historically the CFP has been micro-managed from the centre and subject to criticism for “one size fits all” and “top down” approaches that have not been conducive to compliance. Since the 2002 reform this has changed, with much fuller involvement of stakeholders, notably through the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), which were first established in 2004. In 2007 they were designated as bodies pursuing an aim of general European interest, which allowed their funding to be placed on a securer footing

All seven of the RACs foreseen in the legislation are now operational and Inter-RAC meetings take place, including co-ordination one with the Commission. As well as giving advice on issues directly affecting them, the RACs also work with other bodies as, for example, the joint Inter-RAC and ACFA meeting on control in Brussels in April 2008. A representative of AFCA also has the right to participate in RAC meetings as an active observer.

The recent evaluation by the Commission of the RACs was a positive one but it is clear that certain issues to do with funding, composition and area of coverage remain to be resolved and that action needs to be taken to improve their visibility, the consultation procedures and their access to scientific evidence.

That said, the closer involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process is clearly having a beneficial effect, as evidenced, for example by the voluntary agreement of Scottish fishermen to close areas where there is an abundance of juvenile cod and the decision of the North Sea RAC to ban the discarding of marketable cod.

The evaluation of the Commission of AFCA raised various questions about its objectives, composition and procedures as, also about the role it should play in the longer term. It is

suggested that the latter should be considered in the context of the development of the integrated maritime policy, avoiding overlap with the work of the RACs but allowing close liaison where activities are concerned.

The RACs have expressed a wish for improved access to social and economic advice as well scientific advice. In this context, it would be helpful if the Commission were also to engage in an evaluation of STECF and if closer contacts could be developed with the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee.

Certain of the RACs and the Co-ordinators of the Fisheries Committee have also expressed a wish for a more formalised relationship to be established. Indications of the manner in which this might be developed are contained in the motion for resolution.

In the opinion of the Rapporteur, the improvements already brought about by stakeholder involvement point to future reform of the CFP involving a radical decentralisation so that measures are tailored to particular fisheries in specified areas, according to conditions in them. RACs should be at the core of this decentralisation.

Whilst the CFP should remain a common policy in terms of its aims and objectives and its general regulation, administration and supervision, actual management should be progressively devolved to the RACs, with a view to them playing a full role in this regard by the time the coming reform of the CFP is in place.