



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1998/2136(INI)	Procedure completed
The problem of discarded catches		
Subject 3.15.06 Fishing industry and statistics, fishery products		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Fisheries	PSE HARDSTAFF Veronica Mary	21/01/1998

Key events			
19/06/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
28/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0403/1998	
15/01/1999	Debate in Parliament		
28/01/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0056/1999	Summary
28/01/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
07/05/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2136(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/4/10256

Documentation gateway					
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0403/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0002	28/10/1998	EP	

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0056/1999 OJ C 128 07.05.1999, p. 0015-0083	28/01/1999	EP	Summary
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The problem of discarded catches

The committee adopted by 13 votes to 4, with 1 abstention, the motion for a resolution on the problem of discarded catches. The report points out that there is no easy solution to the problem of overexploitation of fish stocks, as this has been going on for over 30 years. The rapporteur, Ms HARDSTAFF (PES, UK), therefore stresses the need to take a range of measures for certain species of fish and certain fishing grounds in order to cut the size of catches. The resolution also emphasises the need to replace bans on discarding fish, which are genuinely difficult to observe, with effective measures to ensure that the requirement to keep on board, and to land, all the fish caught, including fish which are too small or too young, is not employed as a pretext for using these fish for commercial purposes. The rapporteur calls for fishermen, fish-sellers and processors to be educated not to demand smaller fish or fishing-nets. Measures are also needed to pay for the social costs of this strategy to fishing communities. The report therefore calls as a matter of urgency for more effective support measures to be introduced through the Structural Funds and special subsidies. ?

The problem of discarded catches

The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Veronica Hardstaff (UK, PES) on the problem of fish discards. The report describes current discard levels as unacceptable and highlights the need for appropriate technical measures and controls to reverse this trend. It proposes wider use of selective gear and efforts to achieve a ban on gears which generate excessive bycatches, research to identify species most at risk from discarding, proper marine management and regulation to protect the stocks of certain species and, if necessary, an obligation to change fishing grounds where more than 15% of any single catch are undersized. The Parliament suggests that the Commission should investigate the possibility of banning discards of certain key species. Within this context, it proposes a flexible application of quotas provided there has not been deliberate over-fishing. The report recommends that those landed fish not suitable for human consumption should be used for fishmeal and fish-oil in order to reduce dependence on industrial fishing and that designated species should only be landed at designated ports with proper inspection facilities, to cut down on the number of over-quota fish reaching the markets. With regard to the responsibility of Member States, the report makes the following recommendations: - Member States should fulfil their responsibility to ensure effective and efficient on-board inspections and port controls to make conservation measures work and impose appropriate penalties for abuses of the regulations; - they should commit themselves to close fishing grounds within their jurisdiction when there is a clear conservation case to do so. To relieve pressure on the most at-risk species and as an alternative source of jobs for fishing communities, the report calls for research into increasing the scope of aquaculture. It also urges better training for fishermen, particularly as regards the need for conservation, and better use of structural funds and special grants to reduce dependency on fishing where it is a major occupation.?