


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2000/2068(COS)	Procedure completed
Fishery resources: the Community's participation in Regional Fisheries Organisations RFOs		
Subject 3.15.01 Fish stocks, conservation of fishery resources		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	PECH Fisheries	GUE/NGL JOVÉ PERES Salvador	23/03/2000
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union European Commission	BUDG Budgets	PSE DÜHRKOP DÜHRKOP Bárbara	21/03/2000
	ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Commission DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	Commissioner	

Key events			
08/12/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1999)0613	Summary
13/03/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/10/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
10/10/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0275/2000	
14/11/2000	Debate in Parliament		
15/11/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0510/2000	Summary
15/11/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/08/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2000/2068(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/5/12317

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1999)0613	08/12/1999	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0275/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0006	10/10/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0510/2000 OJ C 223 08.08.2001, p. 0105-0187	15/11/2000	EP	Summary

Fishery resources: the Community's participation in Regional Fisheries Organisations RFOs

PURPOSE : to present a Communication relating to Community participation in Regional Fisheries Organisations (RFOs). CONTENT : the intention expressed by the Community on a number of occasions of playing a more prominent role on the international stage and enhancing its capacity for concerted action in the area of external relations is particularly pressing in the fisheries sector. The disturbing condition of the majority of the world's fish stocks combined with the excessive exploitation capacity of the major world fleets calls for closer international cooperation in managing fishery resources. This cooperation should encompass both the management of stocks that can be fished in waters under the sovereignty of several coastal States and those found partially or wholly beyond those waters, firstly to ensure that measures adopted for the high seas are compatible with those for the EEZs and, secondly, to prevent the principle of the freedom of the high seas to which the Community attaches particular importance from developing into law of the jungle. It is essential then that the Community, ranked fourth among the world's fisheries powers, play a greater role in establishing and determining a regulatory framework to govern fishery resources which is in keeping with its international commitments in order to safeguard on a lasting basis the economic interests of its high-seas fleets and the effective implementation of a policy of responsible fishing. Furthermore, the regional fisheries organisations (RFOs) are the main vehicle for international cooperation. Arising from international agreements, they provide a forum within which representatives of the states meet to establish, using the best scientific data available, arrangements for managing fish stocks. They constitute, therefore, a particularly appropriate mechanism as they provide a legal framework in which account can be taken of the distinctive nature and characteristic features of their area by virtue of their regional character. Without prejudging the necessary consideration of the principles and concepts the Community will have to defend within the RFOs which will be developed further, this Communication will confine itself to dealing with aspects of the role of the Community will be required to perform within the RFOs and evaluating the sharing out of the tasks arising from that participation between the Community and the Member States. In addition, participating in the regional fisheries organisations will represent a heavy burden in terms of representation, participation, providing and transmitting of data and implementing the measures adopted, in particular as regards the monitoring of fishing activities. The intention expressed by the Community of playing a more prominent role on the international stage reaffirms, as far as fisheries and more especially the management of fish stocks on the high seas are concerned, the undertakings the Community gave when ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the other international legal instruments supplementing it. It will require: - the high-profile and necessary presence and active participation of the Community in the regional fisheries organisations, in line with its exclusive competence for external fisheries; - the assignment by the Commission and the Member States of the human and material resources needed for effective participation in the work of the RFOs; - the introduction of arrangements for transposing the RFO recommendations which are both effective and transparent; - the establishment of close and properly understood cooperation between the Commission and the Member States based on the Commission concentrating again on its original mission, i.e. of representation to defend the interests of the Union and its fishermen, together with legislative asks; - the Member States to take on responsibility for monitoring, both financially and in terms of material and human resources, with NAFO being the only exceptional case which should not exist and must be terminated speedily. The Community is a contracting party to 10 regional fisheries organisations and an observer to 2 others. It has become a member of one-third of them over the last 4 years. In addition, it is particularly involved in defining and establishing the SEAFO and the arrangement for the southeast Atlantic. It has expressed an interest, lastly, in playing an active role in setting up an organisation to cover the central western Pacific and has applied for membership of the ICATT. The reason for this increased participation is the wish to be actively involved in framing measures for the conservation and management of resources fished by Community shippers in order to ensure, firstly, that due account is taken of the interests of Nations involved in distant-water fishing in the same way as those of coastal States, and secondly, that the principles and concepts put into effect in the different RFOs are consistent and respect the special features of each of them. It also enables the Community to ensure consistency and synergy with the policy it is pursuing as part of its bilateral fishery relations with non-member countries. It constitutes, in relation to the latter, an assurance of its commitment in relation to sustainable resource management. In line with the obligations arising under the New York Agreement, the Community gives financial encouragement, as part of the fishing agreements it has concluded with developing countries, to the latter's participation in the RFOs concerned.?

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The committee adopted the report by Salvador JOVÉ PERES on the Commission communication. It regretted the fact that the communication dealt with only limited aspects of the subject and called on the Commission to draw up a more comprehensive paper containing the principles for EU action vis-à-vis regional fisheries organisations. The Commission should fully exercise its responsibility to act on behalf of the Community in regional fisheries organisations, including the monitoring of fisheries. The committee also urged the Commission to fulfil its duty to supervise and monitor the activities delegated to the Member States in this area. It stressed that the Commission must be given all the human and material resources needed to exercise its powers and that all these costs should be borne by the Community budget. The report also called on the Commission to: - set up a new unit for major migratory species in its relevant Directorate-General, given that many regional fisheries organisations were largely concerned with regulating fishing for such species; - submit a proposal on monitoring fisheries, envisaging a uniform system of infringements and sanctions, including a ban on selling fishery products from ships which did not comply with the arrangements laid down by regional fisheries organisations; - inform Parliament in sufficient time of the issues dealt with in such organisations which entailed legal obligations for the Community, so that it could participate properly in the decision-making process.?

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The Parliament voted 444 to 24 in favour of a resolution drafted by Mr Salvador JOVE PERES (EUL/NGL, E) calling on the Commission to submit urgently a paper dealing with regional fisheries organisations. The resolution supports the Commission taking a leading role in both monitoring stocks under the Common Fisheries Policy and strengthening links with some thirty five international regional bodies responsible for controlling the world's fisheries resources. While at present a lack of resources at central level means that some powers are delegated to the Member States, the resolution calls for this situation to be rectified so that the Commission can exercise to the full its supervisory and monitoring powers. The resolution calls on the Commission to come up with a proposal to lay down a uniform system of penalties for infringement of the rules.?