


Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2007/2108(INI)
Procedure completed	
Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities	
Subject	
3.15.01 Fish stocks, conservation of fishery resources	
3.15.04 Management of fisheries, fisheries, fishing grounds	
3.15.07 Fisheries inspectorate, surveillance of fishing vessels and areas	
3.70.04 Water control and management, pollution of waterways, water pollution	
3.70.20 Sustainable development	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	PECH Fisheries		14/02/2007
		PSE CASACA Paulo	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	BORG Joe	

Key events			
09/01/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2006)0872	Summary
06/06/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/07/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
23/07/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0297/2007	
05/09/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
05/09/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0368/2007	Summary
05/09/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Procedure subtype	Initiative
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Committee dossier	PECH/6/45015

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(2006)0872	09/01/2007	EC	Summary
Committee draft report	PE388.465	19/04/2007	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE390.732	20/06/2007	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A6-0297/2007	23/07/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T6-0368/2007	05/09/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)5401	18/10/2007	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)5402	24/10/2007	EC	

Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities

PURPOSE: Commission report on Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities.

CONTENT: The Commission present this report following the requirement in Article 14 of Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 and Article 12 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1438/2003, which require Member States to submit to the Commission a report on their efforts during the previous year to achieve a sustainable balance between fleet capacity and available fishing opportunities.

The report is divided into two parts:

- the first part describes the rules that must be followed by Member States in managing their fleets and summarises the information submitted according to Article 13 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1438/2003 on implementing rules for fleet policy;
- the second part shows the development of Member States' fleet capacities in 2005 in the form of numeric tables and graphs containing the relevant information on the management of entries and exits of vessels for each national fleet.

The Commission considers that the quality of the reports submitted by Member States has improved compared to that of 2004. Member States emphasised in their reports the implementation of the national fleet management regime but the assessment of the balance between fishing fleet capacity and available fishing opportunities is more complete than in previous reports.

Results for the mainland fleet (Community fleet except vessels registered in the outermost regions): according to the Community Fleet Register the three-year period during 2003 ? 2005, the overall capacity of the Community fleet of the EU-15 Member States was reduced by 117,000 GT and 499,000 kW, which represents a net reduction of 6.27 % of the tonnage and 7.28 % of the power of the EU-15 fleet. The net reduction during 2005 was of approximately 50,000 GT, while it was of 23,000 GT in 2004 and 44,000 GT in 2003. These reductions appear to be relatively small, if one considers the high levels of fishing pressure in most Community fisheries, particularly for demersal species.

In the new Member States, starting from 1 May 2004, fleet capacity has been reduced by 41,000 GT and 101,000 kW, which represents a reduction of 18 % in tonnage and 18 % in power for their fleets compared to their fishing capacity on the accession date. During 2003, 2004 and 2005 approximately 132,000 GT and 427,000 kW were withdrawn from the EU fleet with public aid, which means that this capacity cannot be replaced. Of this capacity withdrawn with public aid, the overwhelming majority (112,000 GT and 373,000 kW) came from the EU-15 Member States. The capacity withdrawn by the new Member States with public aid since 1 May 2004 was 20,000 GT and 54,000 kW.

A majority of Member States have complied with the rules. However, Greece did not comply with the entry-exit regime in terms of tonnage, although its degree of non-compliance is very small, since the tonnage ceiling was exceeded by only 0.29%. The Greek authorities contest the assessment of the Commission; according to them, Greece has complied with the entry-exit regime.

Results for the fleets registered in the outermost regions: the fleet registered in the Spanish and Portuguese outermost regions has been significantly reduced both in terms of tonnage and power. For the French overseas departments there has been a slight decrease in the total number of vessels and their tonnage and an increase in power. With regard to the application of the special regime for these fleets, out of the 17 outermost regions segments, one had exceeded its reference level in terms of power at the end of 2005 (the segment '4FJ' - vessels under 12 m in length of the French Department of Martinique) and another segment exceeded its reference level in terms of tonnage (the segment 'CA3' ? vessels of more than 12 m in length registered in the Canary Islands and fishing in international and third country waters). The special regime ceases to apply to these segments from the moment they reach their maximum reference level and reference to regulation.

The Commission goes on to state that the summary report is based on the Member States' annual reports and on the data extracted from the CFR. Some marginal discrepancies remain between the figures presented by Member States in their reports and those resulting from their declarations to the CFR. Work on eliminating these differences should be continued.

In order to improve the quality of annual reports the Commission, together with the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture, intends to establish more detailed guidelines for their content and to introduce a common harmonised methodological approach with greater emphasis on an analysis of the development of fishing capacity in relation to the available fish stocks. These issues will be discussed in forthcoming meetings of the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

In forthcoming annual reports more attention should be paid to the contribution of the new regime adopted in 2002 to manage the Community fleet to achieve a better balance between fleets and fish stocks. The impact of national decommissioning schemes, in particular on fishing effort reductions in fisheries subject to management or recovery plans, should be better identified and assessed.

Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities

The Committee on Fisheries adopted by a large majority an own-initiative report drawn up by Paolo CASACA (PES, Portugal) on Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities. It began by congratulating the Commission on its annual report, which, in spite of the difficulties arising from the diverging information supplied by the Member States, provides an overview of the development of the national fleets that makes it possible to analyse their development. The Committee reiterated the need for a more wide-ranging approach. This included the consideration of certain factors which have a significant impact on the marine environment and the state of fish stocks, such as coastal and offshore pollution, industrial and agricultural effluents, bottom dredging and maritime transport, to complement current management methods. The report considered a Community initiative in this area to be a priority.

Whilst there has been a gradual reduction in the overall capacity and power of the fleet (approximately 2% per year), there has been no reduction in the level of exploitation of stocks, since the technical improvements made to vessels cancel out or exceed the possibilities as regards yield and fishing effort that these modest reductions represent. Members felt it unacceptable that Member States failed to comply with their obligations to forward data in relation to matching their fishing capacity to the state of stocks. They called on the Commission to consider this non-compliance as serious misconduct and penalise it accordingly, as is the case for fishermen's obligations as regards catch data. It was stressed that matching national fleets to existing resources must take account of the reduction in fishing effort already brought about - in particular the degree of compliance with Multi-Annual Guidance Programmes.

The Commission was also urged to do the following:

- submit proposals for guidelines for Member States to present harmonised information making it possible to carry out comparative analyses of developments in the various national fleets and provide each of the Member States with disaggregated information on the level of catches by vessels operating in its coastal areas;
- adopt the relevant initiatives for the possible transition from a fleet management system based on restricting vessel tonnage and power, to a scheme under which fishing effort can be controlled through management by geographical fishing areas and the use of appropriate technical measures for the sustainable management of resources;
- submit proposals to improve the safety of small-scale coastal and artisanal fishing vessels in the EU, aimed at increasing the size and power of engines and renovating vessels so as to improve the hygiene and safety conditions on board, without thereby implying an increase in fishing effort;
- submit a proposal for the setting up of a specific Regional Advisory Council for the outermost regions.

Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Paolo CASACA (PES, PT) on Member States' efforts during 2005 to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities, and it called on the Commission to adopt the relevant initiatives for the possible transition from a fleet management system based on restricting vessel tonnage and power to a scheme under which fishing effort can be controlled through management by geographical fishing areas.

Parliament congratulated the Commission on its annual report, which, in spite of the difficulties arising from the diverging information supplied by the Member States, provided an overview of the development of the national fleets that makes it possible to analyse their development. It urged the Commission to submit proposals for guidelines that would ensure that Member States presented harmonised information making it possible to carry out comparative analyses of developments in the various national fleets and provide each of the Member States with disaggregated information on the level of catches by vessels operating in its coastal areas.

Parliament pointed out that in recent years, the EU has approved various recovery and management plans for overexploited stocks (hake, cod, sole, eel and prawns) and these plans might have to be extended to other species of commercial value in the future. However, despite the progress made since the first guidance plan for the fleet was introduced in 1983, with the aim of reducing fleet capacity and power in line with available resources, the specific features of national fleets and fishing industries have not been taken into account and this goal has not been achieved by some Member States, certain of which have even increased their fishing effort. A more wide-ranging approach was required. This included the consideration of certain factors which have a significant impact on the marine environment and the state of fish stocks, such as coastal and offshore pollution, industrial and agricultural effluents, bottom dredging and maritime transport, to complement current management methods. The report considered a Community initiative in this area to be a priority.

Whilst there has been a gradual reduction in the overall capacity and power of the fleet (approximately 2% per year), there has been no reduction in the level of exploitation of stocks, since the technical improvements made to vessels cancel out or exceed the possibilities as regards yield and fishing effort that these modest reductions represent. Members felt it unacceptable that Member States failed to comply with their obligations to forward data in relation to matching their fishing capacity to the state of stocks. They called on the Commission to consider this non-compliance as serious misconduct and penalise it accordingly, as is the case for fishermen's obligations as regards catch data. It was stressed that matching national fleets to existing resources must take account of the reduction in fishing effort already brought about - in particular the degree of compliance with Multi-Annual Guidance Programmes.

Parliament felt that, in view of the current situation and the continuing existence of overcapacity, it might be desirable to reconsider the usefulness of the current schemes for bringing the Community fleet into line with fishing opportunities, leaving room in the Community policy on fisheries conservation and management for other more efficient systems which might themselves lead to capacity reductions even greater than those laid down by Community legislation. Accordingly, it called on the Commission to adopt the relevant initiatives for the possible transition from a fleet management system based on restricting vessel tonnage and power, to a scheme under which fishing effort can be controlled through management by geographical fishing areas and the use of appropriate technical measures for the sustainable management of resources.

The Commission was also asked to submit proposals to improve the safety of small-scale coastal and artisanal fishing vessels in the EU, aimed at increasing the size and power of engines and renovating vessels so as to improve the hygiene and safety conditions on board, without thereby implying an increase in fishing effort. Lastly, it was asked to submit a proposal for the setting up of a specific Regional Advisory Council for the outermost regions.

Parliament underlined that dialogue and the industry's participation in all measures laid down to achieve a balance between the fleet and the state of resources were essential conditions if these measures are to prove effective.