


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1994/2114(COS)
The crisis in the Community's fishing industry	
Subject 3.15 Fisheries policy	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	PECH Fisheries	PSE PERY Nicole	26/09/1994
Council of the European Union	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Fisheries	1788	28/09/1994

Key events			
19/07/1994	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1994)0335	Summary
14/09/1994	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/09/1994	Debate in Council	1788	Summary
04/06/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
04/06/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0189/1996	
18/06/1996	Debate in Parliament		
20/06/1996	Decision by Parliament	T4-0347/1996	Summary
20/06/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/07/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1994/2114(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/4/05882

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(1994)0335	19/07/1994	EC	Summary
Motion for a resolution	B4-0562/1995	26/06/1995	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A4-0189/1996 OJ C 198 08.07.1996, p. 0005	04/06/1996	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0347/1996 OJ C 198 08.07.1996, p. 0159-0171	20/06/1996	EP	Summary

The crisis in the Community's fishing industry

The Commission communication recommends a series of initiatives to resolve the crisis in the fisheries sector, while stressing that there is no question of restrictions on imports and that structural measures are the best way of safeguarding the future of the fisheries sector. According to the Commission, the crisis in the fisheries sector needs global action by all interested parties and will only be overcome by taking a series of simultaneous initiatives to conserve fish stocks and control fishing activities, structures and markets. Consequently: - stock management should be stepped up and controls made more efficient; - controls of catches should be stepped up; - measures to eliminate overcapacities in fisheries are the first step towards resolving the crisis on the markets for fisheries products and need to be supplemented by social and economic support measures to reform and reconvert the sector (e.g. bringing fish-dependent zones under the Structural Funds, Community "Pesca" initiative, cofinancing of voluntary and/or early retirement schemes, temporary Community incentives to implement minimum income and bad weather compensation schemes, training of fishermen); - management of the markets should be improved by strengthening the role of producer organizations (a posteriori examination procedure as regards extending schemes to non-members, improving exchanges of information, incentives for organizations which introduce quality improvement plans, obligation for all producers to comply with the Community withdrawal price in the event of serious disturbances of market conditions). As far as income support for producers is concerned, the Commission proposes a measure which makes provision for financial compensation for withdrawals to be increased to 95% of the applicable withdrawal price for a limited period in order to ease the cash flow of producer organizations which comply with the Community withdrawal price in the event of serious disturbances of market conditions.?

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The report, which was adopted with one abstention, takes up several aspects of an industry which in recent times has increasingly become the focus for renewed political and media attention. It should be remembered that, it was only in this legislature that fisheries become a subject for scrutiny by a full parliamentary committee, having previously been handled by a sub-committee of the Committee on Agriculture. Indeed, one of the main underlying themes of the report is the distinct nature of fisheries, fisheries products and the CFP from agriculture and the CAP. Mrs PERY points in particular to the link between sea products and the GATT and to the fact that they therefore lack the protection afforded to agricultural products by the CAP. As a result, she believes that the CFP "is now basically unsound", with the Community industry being forced to face world competition without any effective safety net. The rapporteur identifies resources and their management as the most important aspect of fisheries policy, calling for the introduction of various new actions to improve the regulation of stocks and in particular for innovative new technical measures to protect juvenile fish. (It appears that the Commission is set to table proposals in this regard in the very near future). In her draft report, Mrs PERY had called on the Commission to make radical changes to the organisation of the market and to consider setting up a specific financial instrument to compensate for producers' losses of income and to introduce a triggering threshold based on the average price of Community production, beyond which a compensatory allowance would be payable. The Committee, however, did not feel able to go this far and adopted several amendments inviting the Commission to study how existing instruments could be improved and made more flexible. Nevertheless, it was agreed that particularly in the case of fresh fish, a financial instrument should be put in place, with 2% of the Union's fisheries budget, to support prices in the even of a market collapse. With regard to structural support for the peripheral regions dependant on fishing, Members agreed with the rapporteur that the results of the PESCA scheme had been disappointing to date. The Committee called therefore on the Commission to launch a "SEA LEADER" Programme (similar to the agricultural "LEADER" Programme) in all the maritime Member States of the Union. Other amendments adopted to the draft report included measures to promote the involvement of producers in the running of the CFP and to increase their confidence in the work of scientists, to improve training and to promote greater transparency in international agreements. Members also called for a greater "Mediterranean dimension" in fisheries policy with a follow-up to the Barcelona Conference and for the inclusion of the potential problems posed by future enlargement to the East in Commission thinking and any action it might propose to alleviate the current crisis in the sector. One amendment which was not adopted (6 for, 7 against, 1 abstention) concerned the difficulties caused by "quota hopping". This may, however, have been due to translation problems in the different language versions, where in some cases the amendment appeared to have been interpreted as referring to "quota swapping". Following a lengthy

discussion, during which the linguistic nuances were not resolved, it was agreed that the amendment could be re-tabled in plenary if its author (Mr TEVERSON (ELDR, UK) so wished. ?

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Noting that the crisis in the fisheries sector involved not only resources (over-fishing, dwindling fish stocks, degradation of the marine environment etc.) but also prices and fishermen's incomes, as a direct result of the fall in producer prices, the report by Mrs PERY (PSE, F), adopted by Parliament proposes a whole range of measures with a view to a common fisheries policy which meets the concerns of fishermen and other economic operators dependent on this sector. In particular, they must be involved more closely in policy making, to restore their confidence in the European Union's management of the CFP. It therefore calls on the Commission and the Council to clarify what importance they attach to the 'production' dimension in the common fisheries policy and, on that basis, to assess where the sector's future lies. It calls on the Commission to: . make realistic assessments of the available and accessible resources both in EU waters and elsewhere, . consider in what way the management of resources could be improved (protection of areas in which young fish are concentrated, the improvement of working instruments and fishing methods and the improvement of water quality, etc.) and to allow stocks to recover to the point where their conservation is ensured and they can support a viable fishing industry. Reaffirming that the reduction in fishing effort must not depend on the scrapping of vessels, as the Commission proposes, but rather on active policies to defend fish stocks, it calls on the Commission to determine the conditions in which the Member States may legally limit the quota transfer procedure. It calls on the Council to implement a stringent and equitable fleet-reduction programme to check the over-exploitation of fish stocks, while ensuring fair compensation to the fishermen affected by this measure. Producers' organizations must also be more closely involved in market policy. Parliament called, moreover, for: - the adoption, for all major fish stocks, of long-term scientifically-based management strategies which will ensure the conservation of stocks; - a stepping up of the Communitarization of 'prices and markets' by making the existing regulations more binding (compulsory withdrawal prices, reference prices, unfair competition to be monitored as regards the health rules for imported products); - greater flexibility in the management of the CFP instruments (as in the case of the premium which may be paid to the industry when it proves that it has paid a minimum price to the producer); - the introduction of a financial instrument to support prices in the event of market prices collapsing (especially those for fresh fish); - the promotion of fishery products and improvement of the quality thereof; - a stepping up of monitoring at all levels (origin of the raw materials of processed products, in particular), for the monitoring system to combine the responsibility of the Member States and of the Union, for monitoring to be carried out in all fishing zones, and for it to be consistent and cost-effective. Parliament also called for the encouragement of inter-trade agreements between producers and processors and for measures to be taken to rebuild confidence between fisheries scientists and fishermen. It demanded the application of socio-economic measures, such as early retirement and training plans for fishermen and persons needing to be retrained. It called for the structural measures for the most affected remote coastal and island regions to be strengthened. In particular it called on the Commission to launch an information campaign on PESCA and make this programme a 'LEADER' for the sea. Parliament considered that, despite the current crisis, the fishing fleet must continue to be modernized, using vessels with improved health and safety conditions and more selective fishing instruments, but ensuring that fleet capacity is not increased in any way. The regeneration of shipbuilding and maintenance activities will enable the Union to maintain a degree of autonomy in the fisheries sector and make Europe's presence felt in the maritime sector. With respect to the conclusion of fisheries agreements, it looked for a far greater degree of budgetary and institutional transparency. The interests of producers should be included in the negotiations for EU Global Cooperation Agreements with third countries, in particular by reducing customs duties and providing financial support in return for the granting of certain fishing quotas. Finally, such agreements must take account of the conservation of world stocks and the enforcement of conservation measures. ?