

Fish stock conservation: removal of fins of sharks on board vessels

2011/0364(COD) - 01/10/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Maria do Céu PATRÃO NEVES (EPP, PT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 on the removal of fins of sharks on board vessels.

The parliamentary committee recommends that the European Parliaments position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should be to amend the Commission proposal as follows:

A necessary element of the Unions marine ecosystem: Members wish to underline that shark fins do not constitute a traditional ingredient of the European diet, but sharks do constitute a necessary element of the Unions marine ecosystem. Therefore, their management and conservation, as well as in general, the promotion of a sustainably managed fishing sector for the benefit of the environment and of the people working in the sector, should be the priority.

Special fishing permit: this is defined as a prior fishing authorisation issued and managed in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy. The text has been recovered from the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1185/2003 and altered following the two main options of this report, i.e. to strengthen control and to narrow the present derogation.

On-board storage of shark fins: to facilitate on board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the carcass or, in the cases indicated in Article 4 (derogations), completely removed from the carcasses. According to Members, completely removing the fins from the carcasses can save room on board, working hours, and also fuel because vessels have a longer autonomy at sea.

Reports: where fishing vessels flying the flag of a Member State catch, retain on-board, tranship or land sharks, the flag Member State shall send to the Commission, annually, by 1 May at the latest, a comprehensive annual report on the implementation of this Regulation during the previous year. The report shall describe the monitoring of compliance with the Regulation of vessels in the EU and non-EU waters, and the enforcement measures taken by Member States in cases of noncompliance.

In particular, the following information shall be provided:

- the number, date and place of inspections carried out;
- the number and nature of cases of noncompliance detected, including a full identification of the vessel(s) involved and the penalty applied for each case of noncompliance;
- the total landings by species (weight/number) and by port.