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on the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy
(2009/2106(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

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PR_INI

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (2009/2106(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2002 on the Commission Green Paper on the future of the common fisheries policy²,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982,
- having regard to the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks ('New York Agreement' of 4 August 1995),
- having regard to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted on 31 October 1995,
- having regard to the Declaration made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held from 26 August to 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg,
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)³,
- having regard to the Commission communication on the role of the CFP in implementing an ecosystem approach to marine management (COM(2008)0187) and Parliament's resolution of 13 January 2009 on the CFP and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication on rights-based management tools in

¹ OJ L 358, 31.12.2002, p. 59.

² OJ C 271 E, 7.11.2002, p. 67.

³ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

⁴ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2009)0009.

fisheries (COM(2007)0073) and Parliament's resolution of 10 April 2006 on rights-based management tools in fisheries (A6-0060/2008),

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'Implementing sustainability in EU fisheries through maximum sustainable yield' (COM(2006)0360) and Parliament's resolution on the implementation of sustainable fishing in the EU on the basis of maximum sustainable yield¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'A policy to reduce unwanted by-catches and eliminate discards in European fisheries' (COM(2007)0136) and Parliament's resolution of 31 January 2008 on a policy to reduce unwanted by-catches and eliminate discards in European fisheries²,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 April 2009 on 'Governance within the CFP: the European Parliament, the Regional Advisory Councils and other actors'³, and its resolution of 6 September 2006 on the 2006-2008 Action Plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy⁴,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 3 September 2008 entitled 'A European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research: A coherent European Research Area framework in support of a sustainable use of oceans and seas (COM(2008)0534) and Parliament's resolution of 19 February 2009 on applied research relating to the common fisheries policy⁵,
- having regard to its resolutions of 6 July 2005 on the proposal for a Council regulation on the European Fisheries Fund⁶, of 15 June 2006 on inshore fishing and the problems encountered by inshore fishing communities⁷, of 15 December 2005 on women's networks: fishing, farming and diversification⁸, and of 28 September 2006 on improving the economic situation in the fishing industry⁹,
- having regard to Court of Auditors Special Report No 7/2007 on the control, inspection and sanction systems relating to the rules on conservation of Community fisheries resources, and Council Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing¹⁰, Council Regulation (EC) 1006/2008 of 29 September 2008 concerning authorisations for fishing activities of Community fishing vessels outside Community waters and the access of third country vessels to Community waters¹¹, Council Regulation (EC) .../.... establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the

¹ OJ C 187 E, 24.7.2008, p. 228.

² OJ C 68 E, 21.3.2008, p. 26.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA-PROV(2009)0317.

⁴ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 155.

⁵ Texts adopted, P6_TA-PROV(2009)0065.

⁶ OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 324.

⁷ OJ C 300 E, 9.12.2006, p. 504.

⁸ OJ C 286 E, 23.11.2006, p. 519.

⁹ OJ C 306 E, 15.12.2006, p. 417.

¹⁰ OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.

¹¹ OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 33.

rules of the Common Fisheries policy, and its resolutions of 23 February 2005¹, 15 February 2007², 5 June 2008³, 10 April 2008⁴ and 22 April 2009⁵,

- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2007 on the common organisation of the market in the fishers and aquaculture products sector⁶,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Launching a debate on a Community approach towards Ecolabelling schemes for fisheries products’ (COM(2005)0275) and Parliament’s resolution of 7 September 2006 on the same subject⁷,
- having regard to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFUE) and its resolution of 7 May 2009 on Parliament's new role and responsibilities in implementing the Lisbon Treaty⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2007 on a future Maritime Policy for the Union: a European vision for the oceans and seas⁹, and its resolution of 2 September 2008 on fisheries and aquaculture in the context of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe¹⁰,
- having regard to the Commission communications on an integrated maritime policy, in particular the communications entitled ‘Guidelines for an integrated approach to maritime policy: towards best practice in integrated maritime governments and stakeholder consultation’ (COM(2008)0395), ‘Roadmap for maritime spatial planning: achieving common principles in the EU’ (COM(2008)0791) and ‘Developing the International dimension of the Integrated maritime policy of the European Union’ (COM(2009)0536), and the recent progress report on the EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy (COM(2009)0540),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Building a sustainable future for aquaculture - A new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture’ (COM(2009) 0162),
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper entitled ‘Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2009)0163),

¹ OJ C 304 E, 1.12.2005, p. 258.

² OJ C 287 E, 29.11.2007, p. 502.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0245

⁴ OJ C 247 E, 15.10.2009, p. 87.

⁵ Texts adopted, P6_TA-PROV(2009)0255.

⁶ OJ C 305 E, 18.12.2008, p. 271.

⁷ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 233.

⁸ Texts adopted, P6_TA-PROV(2009)0373.

⁹ OJ C 175 E, 10.7.2008, p. ... (P6_TA(2007)0343).

¹⁰ Texts adopted P6_TA-PROV(2008)0382.

- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A7-0000/2009).
- A. whereas the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea should consistently be used as the basis for running the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), in particular its provisions on international management of the fisheries sector,
 - B. whereas the European Union (EU) is an entity governed by international law which, in keeping with the provisions of its Treaties and operating rules, is specifically intended to guarantee economic, social and political integration of its policies, including the CFP,
 - C. whereas the basic aim of the CFP, as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002, is to ensure the sustainable development and economic and social viability of the fisheries sector and the conservation of marine biological resources,
 - D. whereas, pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002, the CFP covers conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources, aquaculture, and the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products where such activities are practised on the territory of Member States or in Community waters or by Community fishing vessels or, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the flag State, nationals of Member States (Article 1(1)),
 - E. whereas the application of the CFP interacts directly with areas as vast as the environment, safety, public health, consumer protection and regional development and whereas it is essential to guarantee proper and careful harmonisation between all these areas,
 - F. whereas the current geopolitical, economic and social situation and the drawing-up of a strategy and action plan for the preservation and sustainable development of the oceans and seas in Europe and the world (integrated maritime policy – IMP), justify increased decision-making power for Parliament with regard to the CFP,
 - G. whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which brings together experts from all over the world, has assessed the impact of climate change and concluded that many ecosystems are under threat owing to an unprecedented combination of factors and disturbances associated with climate change,
 - H. whereas EU primary law and, recently, the TFEU have recognised the nature of the constraints affecting the outermost regions (ORs) which, by reason of their permanent and pervasive character and joint presence, differentiate those regions from the Union's other regions with geographical disadvantages and/or population problems,
 - I. whereas, in order to be effective, the CFP should be restructured with a view to the multidisciplinary involvement of all groups directly or indirectly connected with the sector, in particular fishermen, vessel owners, the scientific community and politicians,
 - J. whereas, despite the significant progress made following the revision of the CFP in 2002, serious problems relating to fleet overcapacity and the scarcity of fishery resources still

remain and have worsened in recent years,

- K. whereas the maintenance of modern, competitive and safe fishing fleets is not incompatible with the reduction in fishing capacity, which has in fact been carried out by various Member States in order to bring it more closely into line with the availability of resources,
- L. whereas fishing is essential to the livelihood of many coastal communities, which have engaged in this activity for several generations and have thus, in addition, contributed to the EU's cultural heritage,
- M. whereas the Community fisheries sector is a source of high-quality food and plays an essential role in respect of employment and social cohesion in the EU's coastal, remote and outermost regions,
- N. whereas it is now generally accepted that there are alternative fisheries management mechanisms which can usefully supplement the existing systems and play a significant role in the Community's management of the sector,
- O. whereas the EU will need to coordinate its development policy and the CFP and devote more human, technical and budgetary resources to the fisheries sector in the context of its development cooperation policy with third countries,
- P. whereas Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) play a vital and increasingly important role in the use and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in Community and international waters,
- Q. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing constitutes one of the most serious threats against a sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources which jeopardises the very foundation of the CFP and international efforts to promote better ocean governance;
- R. whereas the greatest possible focus should be given to the strategic importance of aquaculture and its development around the world, both in socio-economic terms and with regard to food security,

GENERAL

1. Welcomes the Commission's initiative of submitting the Green Paper, which is forming the basis to a consultation procedure and a major discussion on the constraints and challenges facing the current CFP, with a view to an urgent and far-reaching reform thereof;
2. Welcomes also the two main principles set out by the Commission with a view to an effective and successful reform of the CFP, namely the need to give more

responsibility to the sector, based on the establishment of conditions favourable to good fishing practice and to make management models more flexible in order to create alternatives to the traditional single system of TACs and quotas;

3. Stresses that the current CFP is one of the most integrated Community policies, which gives the Community broad powers for the management of marine resources;
4. Stresses that despite having been extensively reformed in 2002, the CFP, 27 years after its establishment, is faced with serious problems whose main features are overfishing, overcapacity, overinvestment and waste, with additional aspects, such as the economic and social regression, currently affecting the sector, globalisation of the fisheries and aquaculture market and the consequences of climate change;
5. Points out that Parliament has in previous terms drawn attention to the fact that CFP rules were not being sufficiently complied with and has repeatedly called on Member States to improve controls, harmonise inspection and sanction criteria, ensure transparency of inspection findings and strengthen the Community inspection systems;
6. Emphasises that, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament will no longer be merely a consultation body but will become a co-legislator in the fisheries sector, sharing decision-making power with the Council;
7. Points out that RFMOs play a vital role in the governance and application of good fishing practice within their respective jurisdictions;
8. Stresses that the CFP reform process should be finalised at the beginning of 2011 to ensure that it is duly taken into account in discussions for the forthcoming EU financial framework and the reformed CFP is fully implemented;
9. Stresses that scientific knowledge of marine ecosystems is a sine qua non for the establishment of a policy for the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries resources;
10. Stresses that, notwithstanding the degree of complexity of some procedures for modifying fisheries management models and the difficulties, in particular legal problems, which may appear in this process, these and not insuperable, as shown by the successful application of other management models in other parts of the world, such as transmissible fishery rights;
11. Stresses that, despite the decommissioning measures taken, some sections of the European fleet have not been sufficiently renewed and there are still vessels which are obsolete or very old and which need to be modernised with a view to ensuring greater on-board safety and a lesser environmental impact without increasing fishing capacity;
12. Stresses that the success of aquaculture will depend on an enterprise-friendly environment at national and/or local level and that Member States and regional authorities should be given guidelines enabling them to establish a framework suitable for the implementation of the Community approach;

13. Stresses that population growth in the European Union and its future enlargements, as well as climate change factors, may have a considerable impact on the current fishing and fish farming management structure;

SPECIFIC ASPECTS

Protection and conservation of resources and scientific knowledge

14. Considers that CFP commitments to reversing the economic and social consequences of reduced fishing possibilities must be compatible with the long-term sustainability of the sector;
15. Maintains that the CFP should adopt an ecosystem approach, which should be taken into account equally in all of the economic activities carried on, where these affect the marine environment;
16. Maintains that the reform of the CFP must continue to observe the precautionary principle set out in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and in the New York Agreement;
17. Maintains that a more selective approach should be applied to fishing gear in order to avert and/or reduce by-catches, thus making for more responsible fishing;
18. Urges the Commission to conduct a detailed and exhaustive survey on the size, characteristics, and spread of the current Community fleet, since this is essential in order to establish a regime whereby the small-scale fleet would be treated differently from the large-scale fleet, each category being defined according to sound criteria;
19. Points to the need for greater investment in research and scientific knowledge in the fisheries field, and for the fisheries sector to be dovetailed more effectively into the subject areas covered by the framework programmes to promote research;

Profitability and professional advancement

20. Maintains that the exploitation of fish stocks has to be based on the principle of maximum sustainable yield;
21. Urges the Commission to recognise the specific features of, and the differences between, the ORs and to promote support measures geared to the biological and social sustainability of fisheries in those regions;
22. Reiterates that fishing is a vital activity, not just in food terms, but also in social and

cultural terms, and that in many of Europe's coastal regions it constitutes the main – and in some cases the sole – means of obtaining a livelihood for the numerous families who depend on it directly or indirectly, and it helps to enliven the coasts and knit together their socio-economic fabric, in conjunction with other maritime activities;

23. Urges the Commission to draw up a specific Community support programme for small-scale coastal and non-industrial fisheries;
24. Urges the Commission and the Member States to promote proper training for fishermen with a view to enhancing the status of qualifications, giving prestige to the profession, and attracting more adaptable young people who would be capable of embracing occupational mobility and taking a more entrepreneurial attitude to the sector;
25. Believes that all fishing operators, men and women alike, need to be accorded the same status in all Member States, especially as regards access to social security, and that a strategy must be put in place to provide financial support to fishing professionals who, because fishing capacity has to be adjusted according to the availability of fish stocks, might lose their job;
26. Considers it necessary to ensure higher first-sale prices of fishery products and to reduce the number of middlemen in the chain stretching from producers to consumers and, to an increasing extent, secure the involvement of producers' organisations in the management of stocks and the marketing of fishery products, the aim being to make the catching sub-sector as profitable as possible;
27. Calls on the Commission to draw up a specific eco-labelling programme with a view to enhancing the image of fishery products and promoting consumer health, and to base it on strict monitoring and complete traceability of fisheries, as regards both catches in the wild and aquaculture products;
28. Reiterates the need to provide for strict monitoring and certification of fishery products entering the Community market, including imports, in order to ascertain that they come from sustainable fisheries and, as far as imported products are concerned, satisfy the requirements imposed on Community products, the aim being to create a level playing field on the Community market;

Management models, decentralisation, greater responsibility, and supervision

29. Considers it essential to establish a political framework allowing decisions concerning the sector to be taken on a medium- and long-term basis, applying different operating plans consistent with the specific nature of fisheries and the distinctive features of individual European fleets;
30. Considers that management plans should be regularly monitored and assessed, without detracting from the minimum flexibility required to enable them to be adapted swiftly to new circumstances affecting the broader context;

31. Maintains that the management system for the fisheries sector has to abandon the traditional top-down approach, laying emphasis instead on the principle of regionalisation and subsidiarity (horizontal decentralisation) and the participation of professionals in the sector, taking into account the multifarious specific features of the Community fleet; firmly rejects any attempt to adopt a universal Community fisheries management model, in a form serving to impose uniformity;
32. Urges the Commission to carefully explore the possibility of adopting new fisheries management mechanisms, as opposed to the TAC and quota system, for example fishing effort management and the use of transferable fishing rights, since such arrangements would enable the fleet to be adapted in a more flexible way, in line with the actual diversity and distribution of stocks, and could be supported by structural implementing measures, without neglecting the more vulnerable small-scale sector;
33. Maintains that Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) and the Community Fisheries Control Agency should participate more actively in the CFP reform process and be placed in a position, logistically and financially, to exercise their updated responsibilities effectively and to the full;
34. Maintains that regional umbrella organisations, staffed by representatives of the Member States, the sector, other stakeholders, and the scientific community, should set up to exercise management decision-making power and that the RACs, playing their advisory role, should be merged with them; believes that these bodies, working in conjunction, would make for genuine and effective decentralisation of management, in keeping with the Treaty and without undermining the general aims and principles laid down by the Community legislature;
35. Calls for a more comprehensive policy to make Member States take greater responsibility, whereby they would be eligible for structural funding and other forms of Community support if, and only if, they had fulfilled their control and conservation commitments;

Aquaculture and processed products

36. Is convinced that a strong, revitalised aquaculture sector would boost growth in related sectors and help to promote development in coastal and rural areas, with considerable benefits for consumers as well, in the form of ecologically produced nourishing, high-quality food products;
37. Considers that the competitiveness of Community aquaculture should be strengthened by providing ongoing substantial support for research and technological development, planning coastal areas and river basins, so as to facilitate access to space, and encompassing the specific needs of aquaculture within EU market policy;

38. Considers that the sustainable development of aquaculture requires environment-friendly production methods, stringent health and animal welfare standards, and a high level of consumer protection;
39. Calls for support to be given to investment in new fish farming technologies, including intensive systems allowing water to be recycled and offshore salt-water fish farming;
40. Calls on the Commission to encourage the search for new aquaculture species offering high quality and added value, and to promote research and a Community-wide exchange of good practice regarding such species and the related production methods with a view to meeting environmental concerns and securing a better competitive position in relation to other novel foods;

External relations and Community integration

41. Maintains that the Community should establish a stronger presence in RFMOs, the FAO, the UN, and other international organisations with a view to promoting the proper management of international fisheries and combating illegal fishing;
42. Maintains that schemes need to be devised for promoting Community fishery products within and outside the EU by organising transnational campaigns supported under financial instruments, following the practice already employed for certain agricultural products;
43. Maintains that new fisheries agreements with third countries should be encouraged in order to afford the Community fleet easier access to new fishing grounds;
44. Considers that partnership agreements boost job creation in third countries and reduce poverty levels and hence the numbers of immigrants to the EU;
45. Considers that the CFP requires a global approach to the management of fish stocks and must be coordinated with environmental policies and the IMP;
46. Is convinced that real integration of the CFP into the IMP requires political will and that national, regional, and local fishing entities are willing to enter into the necessary commitments;
47. Maintains that proper European maritime spatial planning needs to be systematically implemented, taking into account and safeguarding fishing interests, without altering the current arrangements for exclusive use of the 6-12 nautical mile coastal band or the specific status of the ORs, and seeking to establish biogeographical zones in order to protect the most sensitive marine ecosystems;

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48. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In the European Union, the fisheries sector, like agriculture, is regulated by a common policy. This has been the case since 1970, when the first joint measures relating to equal access to the waters of the various Member States began to be implemented.

In 1976 the structural policy which had in the meantime been taking shape in Europe through a range of measures aimed at establishing a common market in fisheries products, became more clearly defined.

However, it was in 1983 that the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was officially established following a complex and lengthy negotiation process.

Two decades later, in 2002, the CFP underwent a far-reaching reform, aimed at creating the conditions for a proper balance between environmental and biological conservation and economic and social sustainability in the sector.

Six structural constraints were already identified at that stage:

1. Overcapacity of the Community fleet, in terms of available resources;
2. Lack of precise policy objectives and, consequently, of clear guidelines for decisions and implementation;
3. A decision-making process that encourages a short-term focus (which severely penalises sustainable development of fishing activities);
4. No power or flexibility for self-regulation of the sector;
5. Loss of economic profitability in the sector, with alarming disparities in the distribution of income;
6. Lack of supervisory powers of the competent bodies (high rate of infringements).

To tackle these and other problems, joint measures were introduced. Though based on good intentions, they ultimately failed to produce the desired affect. The problems identified in 2002 still exist in 2009 and have even worsened as a result of recent developments relating to the energy crisis and the possible impact of climate change on fish sources.

Moreover, given the world economic crisis and the alarming situation facing the fisheries sector throughout the EU, a change is needed as a matter of urgency in the CFP's current set-up. Fishing is extremely important to the EU. This should not be viewed in terms solely of the limited contribution of fisheries to Member States' GDPs, but also of the sector's role as a source of (direct and indirect) employment in regions in which economic and social alternatives are scarce.

The implication is that the new reformed CFP has to be based on rational, responsible management of resources seeking to conserve fish stocks and preserve the way of life of those

who have traditionally depended on the sea. The aim, in short, is a policy making for a fair and reasonable fish stock regime and geared to the specific needs of fishing regions while also protecting the overriding interests of fishing operators.

The fisheries sector, like all others, will have to be managed in accordance with the principle of equal treatment and free competition among operators.

The reformed CFP should be capable of increasing productivity, stabilising the markets ensuring a decent standard of living for those who earn their livelihood from fishing, and guaranteeing security of supply at reasonable prices for consumers.

The problems with which fisheries today have to contend cannot be viewed or resolved in a partisan or piecemeal way. On the contrary, they demand a cross-cutting integrated approach encompassing all factors which, directly or indirectly, affect the sector and the oceans and their complex interactions.

Just as we had to do when we discussed the maritime policy Green Paper, we must, in this debate on the Green Paper on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, move beyond the entire pigeon-holed perspective and put all of the problems into the wider context in which they arise, exist, and have to be resolved. Only in that way will we be able to erase the present fishing pattern in which four distinguishing features stand out: overfishing, overcapacity, overinvestment, and waste.

The rapporteur's view

The rapporteur considers that, broadly speaking, the reform of the CFP will need to be based on three core principles (a threefold operating imperative):

- protection and conservation of fish stocks (environmental dimension);
- a decent livelihood for fishing operators (social dimension);
- economic profitability of fisheries (economic dimension).

These principles cannot be ranked in order of importance, but must fully converge to achieve a state of dynamic equilibrium, outside of which the fisheries sector cannot be made sustainable and will not be able to develop.

To translate these principles into practice, the rapporteur believes that

- management must be expressly decentralised,
- taking into account the specific features of regions and fisheries and involving all operators in the sector
- so as to create the conditions required for an effective policy of compliance and greater responsibility,
- without which it will be impossible to place stocks on a sustainable footing.

To sum up, this will provide the framework for fishing less and earning more!

Protection and management of resources

The recovery of stocks and their sustainable management must remain a priority for the

Common Fisheries Policy, implying a need to consider and determine the most appropriate ways of proceeding. To date TACs and quotas have been the main management tool, but have not invariably proved best suited to that purpose.

The point therefore needs to be discussed thoroughly and in depth, focusing on alternative ways of ensuring that Community fish stocks can attain levels enabling maximum sustainable yield to be achieved by 2015 – in keeping with the EU's pledge at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit.

Some alternatives have already been discussed, for example the establishment of transferable fishing rights or management of catches by a step-by-step procedure, making use of fishing effort management. Searching assessment is needed, however, to gauge the legal implications that one or more changes at this level might have for the current configuration of the sector.

A decent livelihood for fishing operators

Fishing provides a livelihood for countless coastal communities who, down through the generations, have always devoted themselves to this occupation; to that extent it also contributes to the EU's cultural heritage.

Fishing is a source of good food; it promotes employment and social cohesion in the EU's outermost and coastal regions, where in some cases, as regards the latter regions, it plays a key role in the local economy.

That being the case, up-to-date information should be obtained in order to identify the communities most dependent on fishing and assess the changes that they have undergone in the past decade; the object is to enable action to be taken as and where required in the light of the findings.

The reformed CFP must lay down a strategy providing financial support to fishing operators who, because fishing capacity has to be adjusted according to the availability of stocks, might lose their job and/or income; proper training for fishermen should be promoted forthwith in order to give them entrepreneurial, maritime, and environmental expertise, and an understanding of good hygiene practice and hence widen their range of opportunities in terms of occupational mobility.

Economic profitability of fisheries

Fishing operators will not be able to earn a decent livelihood unless the economic profitability of fisheries is real and starts with producers. It is therefore essential to create conditions making for higher first-sale prices of catches, reducing the number of middlemen in the chain stretching from producers to consumers and encouraging producers to become involved in the marketing of products, with the aim of making the catching sub-sector as profitable as

possible.

Furthermore, if producers' organisations were to participate more actively in the management of fisheries in Community waters, this would help greatly to safeguard the regional interests of European fisheries.

To publicise European products more widely, schemes need to be devised for promoting Community fishery products, within and outside the EU, by organising transnational campaigns supported under financial instruments, following the practice already employed for certain agricultural products. To that end, the Commission needs to pursue a specific eco-labelling programme for fishery products.

Alongside these implementing measures, an effective policy of supervision needs to be enforced, and tightened up as regards third country fishery products offered for sale on the Community market, the object being to eliminate unfair competition and its inevitable adverse effects on the Community fishing economy.

Other points

In addition to the above points, the rapporteur considers that management of the sector should move towards decentralisation and regionalisation of its dynamics as a whole.

In this new context, the Community legislature must continue to chart the aims, principles, and general guidelines for the CFP, together with the key elements of legislation on the management of the sector, but decision-making power must be decentralised as far as technical and implementing measures are concerned, and delegated to the Commission, the Member States, the regions, or the sector itself, as the case may be, having regard to the principles and objectives laid down in advance.

The rapporteur also believes that a more strongly regionalised approach should be brought to bear on the problems affecting Community fisheries and that the Regional Advisory Councils and the Community Fisheries Control Agency should play a more active role in the reform and day-to-day management of the CFP.