



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 8 November 2013

15827/13

**PE 503
PECHE 509**

NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries (PECH) held on 4 November 2013 – Items 1 - 5 and items 10 - 13 on the agenda

The meeting was chaired by Mr MATO ADROVER (EPP, ES).

Items 1, 2 and 3 on the agenda

Adoption of the agenda, approval of minutes, Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that the October II Plenary had given a mandate to open negotiations with the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and to reach agreement at first reading.

Therefore, this item was removed from the agenda.

The minutes of the meeting of 3 October 2013 were approved.

Items 4 and 5 on the agenda

**Common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products
PECH/7/13276**

***II 2011/0194(COD)12005/2/2013 – C7-0376/2013

Rapporteur: Struan Stevenson (ECR)

Responsible: PECH –

- Consideration of draft recommendation for second reading
- Deadline for tabling amendments: 5 November 2013

Common Fisheries Policy

PECH/7/13280

***II 2011/0195(COD)12007/3/2013 – C7-0375/2013

Rapporteur: Ulrike Rodust (S&D)

Responsible: PECH –

- Consideration of draft recommendation for second reading
- Deadline for tabling amendments: 5 November 2013

The EP members representing the two rapporteurs in the meeting (Ms ROSBACH (ECR, DK) and Mr MILANA (S&D, IT)) called on the Committee to adopt the two draft recommendations without proposing any further changes to them and to forward them for a second reading as a matter of urgency.

Item 8 on the agenda

Multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean

PECH/7/12629

***I 2013/0133(COD)COM(2013)0250 – C7-0117/2013

Rapporteur: Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)

Responsible: PECH –

- Consideration of draft report
- Decision on deadline for tabling amendments

The rapporteur on this file, Mr ROMEVA I RUEDA (Greens/EFA, ES), said that his draft report may need to be amended depending on the outcome of the ICCAT Annual Meeting¹, in which some of the members of the Committee would participate.

He asked the Commission to reveal its position concerning the increase in the TAC for tuna. He stressed that it was important to follow the precautionary principle as long as there was no scientific evidence justifying the increase in the TAC. The rapporteur referred to the change proposed by ICCAT to go from a closed to an open fishing season. In this context Mr ROMEVA I RUEDA proposed a clarification to the text of the proposal with regard to the use of gears: he would prefer to make specific reference to the gears permitted to fish for Bluefin tuna rather than to refer to "gears other than those mentioned in paragraphs 1 to 5". The three gears which he would like to see introduced were traps, longliners less than 24 metres in size and hand lines.

¹ To be held from 18 to 25 November 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa.

In his reply, the Commission representative (Mr DEPYPERE, DG MARE) did not express an opinion either on the issue of the increase in the TAC for Bluefin tuna or on the question of the change of fishing season, referring to on-going internal discussions.

Ms FRAGA ESTÉVEZ (EPP, ES) considered that there was no real need to change the Commission's text and said she would prefer to maintain the original drafting.

Item 10 on the agenda

Protocol between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement in force between the two Parties

PECH/7/14057

*** 2013/0315(NLE) COM(2013)0648

Rapporteur: Carmen Fraga Estévez (PPE)

Responsible: PECH –

- Consideration of draft report
- Decision on deadline for tabling amendments

The rapporteur on this dossier, Ms FRAGA ESTÉVEZ (EPP, ES), recalled that the EP Plenary had rejected the extension of the protocol on the basis of the Haglund report in December 2011. She explained that the major shortcomings of the protocol concerned in particular the low cost-benefit index, the environmental issue (status of fish stocks), the question of sustainability and sectoral development as well as the political issue of Western Sahara. The rapporteur recalled that the Parliament had adopted a resolution with recommendations during the same Plenary; moreover, the Council had given the Commission a mandate on the basis of which negotiations could begin on a new protocol.

Ms FRAGA ESTÉVEZ mentioned certain elements of that negotiating mandate, such as the inclusion of the Sahara fisheries zone in the protocol; achievement of sustainable development targets; achievement of adequate economic return for the EU; access for local as well as foreign (including EU) fleets to fishing surplus stocks; introduction of a clause on compliance with human rights; and compliance with international law.

Subsequently, the rapporteur presented her draft report and highlighted the following aspects in particular:

Profitability

- 17% cut in costs with respect to the EU budget;
- Reduction in the number of vessels and 33% increase in fishing opportunities;
- Improved cost-benefit ratio.

Technical measures

- Expansion of fishing zones for categories 1 and 2 (inclusion of the port of Mohammedia);
- More adequate limits set on capacity for longliners and trawlers.

Sustainability

- Basis created for scientific cooperation which could lead to more sustainable application of the protocol;
- Request by the rapporteur: introduction of an annex containing information on catch data, positioning, exit from zones, etc.

Political issues

- Respect for human rights: The rapporteur emphasised that the protocol contained a reference to the requirement for respect for human rights (Article 1 of the protocol) and she recalled the possibility of suspending the protocol and the financial contribution if there was any evidence that those rights were not being respected (Article 8).
- Compliance with international law: Ms FRAGA ESTÉVEZ indicated that the adoption and application of an FPA in a non-autonomous region was *per se* not illegal under international law as long as it could be ensured that it benefited the local population in economic and social terms. She stressed at the same time that if illegalities were detected during the application of the agreement, such non-compliance should lead to the suspension of the protocol.

Participation of the European Parliament in Joint Committee meetings

The rapporteur deeply regretted the fact that the Parliament was not allowed to participate as an observer in Joint Committee meetings. She believed that the EP should be entitled to exercise control and to monitor the implementation of FPAs.

Following the presentation by the rapporteur, an extensive debate ensued focusing to a large extent on the question of human rights in the Western Sahara region.

Ms LÖVIN (Greens/EFA, SE) stressed that it was vital that the local population benefit from the exploitation of fisheries resources. She regretted the fact that it was very difficult to monitor the human rights situation in the Western Sahara region and called for the introduction of a legally binding human rights clause in the protocol.

Mr ROMEVA I RUEDA (Greens/EFA, ES) supported Ms LÖVIN's arguments and drew the attention of the Committee to the contradiction concerning the legality of this agreement, namely that legality was linked to the condition that the Saharawi people benefit from the exploitation of fisheries resources for which no firm evidence had so far been delivered. In order to solve the problem of human rights, he called for the exclusion of the territorial waters of Western Sahara from the protocol. This was supported by both Mr NILSSON (S&D, SE) and Mr TORVALDS (ALDE, FI).

Mr SÁNCHEZ PRESEDO (S&D, ES) said that while he was very sensitive to the political issue, the progress made in terms of the content of the protocol should not be forgotten (economic benefits, environmental issues, sustainability). He believed that the FPA represented a balanced result both for the fisheries sector and with regard to international legality, and could contribute to improving the political situation in the region.

Ms PATRÃO NEVES (EPP, PT) and Mr CADEC (EPP, FR) also supported the agreement and pointed to the consequences set out in the protocol in the event of an absence of respect for human rights. Mr MILANA (S&D, IT) considered that the agreement was beneficial from the point of view of fisheries. He urged the Committee not to fail to adopt it, as this could result not only in a failure to resolve the issue of human rights, but also in a failure to resolve the fisheries issue.

In conclusion, Ms FRAGA ESTÉVEZ considered that the agreement had much improved compared to the previous one and it was in line with the Council mandate and the EP resolution of 2011. In response to the question concerning human rights, she said that this could not be resolved in this Committee. However, she assured members that there were tools available to monitor the implementation of the agreement, and in the event of any human rights violations the protocol and the financial contribution could be suspended.

Deadline for tabling amendments: 6 November 2013

Item 11 on the agenda

Financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability

PECH/7/13055

***I 2013/0200(COD)COM(2013)0428 – C7-0178/2013

Rapporteur: Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)

Responsible: PECH –

- Presentation by the Commission and exchange of views

In his presentation, the Commission representative explained that a number of EU Member States were experiencing serious financial difficulties owing to the effects of the economic and financial crisis. As a consequence they would no longer be in a position to implement their European Fisheries Fund (EFF) programmes without external financial support. The EU therefore decided to put in place financial assistance programmes for the most severely affected Member States to allow them to make quick progress with the implementation of their EFF programmes. However, since the current regulation expired on 31 December 2013, an extension had to be put in place to ensure that the implementation of programmes under the EFF could continue without hindrance for an additional two years.

The Commission representative mentioned that this tool was initially offered to seven Member States², but only four of them³ opted for the use of initial assistance. Therefore only these four Member States could continue to benefit from the assistance programme.

Subsequently, the rapporteur, Ms PATRÃO NEVES (EPP, PT), outlined the main features of the proposal. She stressed that it aimed to anticipate payments and to endeavour to create more flexibility in the programme, but did not entail any increase in the EU budget, which would therefore remain unchanged. Furthermore, all EFF-related expenditure would be covered by this change to the regulation. The rapporteur also pointed to the fact that the proposal tried to ensure the continuity of the existing mechanism while also catering for the urgency of the issue (the regulation currently in force would expire on 31 December 2013). Ms PATRÃO NEVES therefore considered that the proposal was in line with both the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of proportionality and indicated that co-financing rates were increased by 10%, which took account of the severity of the crisis.

² Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Romania, Latvia, Hungary and Ireland.

³ Greece, Portugal, Cyprus and Romania.

After the presentation by the Commission and the rapporteur, no Committee member asked for the floor.

***** *Electronic vote* *****

Item 12 on the agenda

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (repeal of Council Regulations (EC) No 1198/2006, (EC) No 861/2006 and (EC) No XXX/2011 on integrated maritime policy)

*****I 2011/0380(COD)COM(2011)0804 – C7-0460/2011**

Rapporteur: Alain Cadec (PPE)

Responsible: PECH –

The vote on this item was removed from the agenda.

Item 13 on the agenda

Conditions specific to fishing for deep-sea stocks in the North-East Atlantic, provisions for fishing in international waters of the North-East Atlantic and repeal of Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002

PECH/7/10172

*****I 2012/0179(COD)COM(2012)0371 – C7-0196/2012**

Rapporteur: Kriton Arsenis (S&D)

Responsible: PECH –

- Adoption of draft report

The draft report and the draft legislative resolution as amended were adopted with 19 votes in favour, none against and 4 abstentions.

***** *End of electronic vote* *****

Date of next meeting

- 27 November 2013, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
- 28 November 2013, 9.00 – 12.30 (Brussels)