



Report

Discussion on sustainable exploitation of sea bass

12/03/2015, EP Plenary Session, Strasbourg

DEBATE

Mr Johannes Han represented the European Commission on behalf of Mr. Karmenu Vella.

Johannes Han expressed satisfaction for this Motion for Resolution on sustainable exploitation of sea bass. Sea bass stock has been declining dramatically and the Commission has been working with Member States to find solutions. The Commission proposed TACs already in 2012 but unfortunately Member States couldn't agree on how to share TACs between them. Last November the Commission proposed alternative measures notably by limiting the number of days at sea, freezing the number of licenses for commercial fishermen and limiting the daily catches for recreational fishermen. The Council was not able to come to an agreement and the EC decided to take emergency measures. Those are the first measures adopted but a package is envisaged. The second element in this package is to limit the catches of recreational anglers to 3 fish per angler per day. Anglers are responsible for a quarter of the landing of sea bass and it is therefore correct and justify that they collaborate to stop the pressure on the stock. The Council should adopt these measures on the 16 of March. The third element of the package will be directed to commercial fishermen.

The European Commission agrees on the need to consult all stakeholders and to integrate the latest scientific advice on sea bass in the plan.

Debate

MEP Alain Cadec (France, EPP): the level of sea bass stock is declining dramatically and the EU must react. As the EC pointed out, emergency measures have been taken but now the EU needs to look on the long term. This resolution



asks for a multiannual management plan to be put in place according to the CFP rules. The plan must be based on robust scientific findings and new data are needed. An evaluation of all the type of sea bass fisheries, including recreational, is also needed. There are several options available such as TACs, MLS, and recovery periods during spawning.

A Multiannual Management Plan should be put in place through the co-decision procedure and the EP must be involved. All stakeholders must be heard. It is crucial to protect this noble specie and the business that goes with it.

Ulrike Rodust (Germany, S&D): sea bass in a disastrous state and this is the responsibility of Member States. Rodust supports the resolution and in particular a multiannual plan that will help the stock to recover.

Peter Van Dalen (The Netherlands, ECR): he does not agree on this resolution. According to Van Dalen, the fisheries committee should have had the possibility to discuss this issue more deeply, hearing all the parts involved. This is not the best method to handle this issue and you can see it from the text of the resolution. TACs are not the best way to deal with this stock. Sustainable measures to protect sea bass in spawning zones are needed.

Joao Ferreira (Portugal, GUE): fisheries management measures are done in a top down way that do not take into account regional specificities and communities. There is a lack of scientific information and it is important to assess the stock. The resolution ask for EU measures and regionalization but in an inconsistent way.

Norica Nicolai (Romania, ALDE): Sea bass is very important for commercial, small scale and recreational fisheries. The EU needs to strike the right balance between the need of protecting and the need to fish this specie that creates a lot of revenues. The current ban do not solve the problem and Member States must get involved in finding a solution. Mrs. Nicolai thinks that a multiannual regional plans is needed for the medium term and the plan must take into account recreational fisheries.

Linnéa Engström (Sweden, Greens): agrees on the resolution. A management plan that take into account all fisheries of sea bass – commercial and recreational is needed. It is a limited resources so everybody should be covered by the plan.

Raymond Finch (UK, EFDD): The UK warned on this both France and the EC. France, with the support of the Commission, continued to fish sea bass. Now UK fishermen and sea anglers are being punished for the crimes of others. British sea anglers have been saying for years that it was time to save the bass and the EU has done nothing. UK should exit the CFP and re-establish its EEZ.

Gabriel Mato (Spain, EPP): there is not enough scientific information on sea bass. A lot of small scale fisheries live on sea bass, it is not easy to change that.

Moreover, sea bass is largely fished by sport fishermen. He agrees on a multiannual plan but it is important to take into account regional diversity without forgetting specific measures for recreational fishermen.

Renata Briano (Italy, S&D): the resolution includes some important elements, such as the need of scientific data and the consideration of recreational fishermen. Recreational fishermen need to be included in the management and conservation of the stock. But, the public must consume this specie in a sustainable way. Rising demand will put pressure on all the stocks, not only the EU ones.

Julie Girling (UK, ECR): welcome the resolution. Further considerations are needed for recreational fisheries. In the UK, the recreational sector is taking a sensitive approach to the issue by showing its willingness to accept conservation measures such as a bag limit but these measures must be workable and proportionate.

Nils Torvalds (Sweden, ALDE): Mr. Torvalds is satisfied with the resolution.

Anja Hazekamp (The Netherlands, GUE): almost 90% of species are overfished. The current measures must be extended as long as a multiannual plan is not in place. She asked her colleagues to support the amendments going in this direction and more protection measures.

Werner Khun (Germany, EPP): Quotas are needed for sea bass and a multiannual plan for its fishing areas is needed to reach a good stock level.

Ricardo Serrao Santos (Portugal, S&D): Portugal is already fishing sea bass in a sustainable way but this is not happening in the rest of the EU. Moreover, there are no data on the stocks. Specific management targets are needed and that is what RACs are saying for some time. There are two different families of sea bass in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic and they need different approaches under the same regulation.

Carlos Iturgaiz (Spain, EPP): supports the resolution proposed by Cadec and agrees on the need to protect sustainable fisheries in all the concerned areas. A multiannual management plan is needed to guarantee sustainable fishing and to protect the business. He believes that these measures are demanded by all the sectors involved. TACs can be an interesting way to deal with this issue if based on scientific data in order to maintain the stock.

Notis Marias (Greece, ECR): serious measures must be taken to protect the sea bass stocks. It is important to find a good balance between conservation and business.

Ivan Jakovčić (Croatia, ALDE): stocks must be protected by taking into account the differences between regions. In the Adriatic, there is an important social component of recreational fisheries and many families that supports themselves through this activity. As demand is rising, it is important to support sea bass aquaculture.

Johannes Hahn, EU Commission: thinks that the debate was very interesting. It is important to put in place quick measures. Glad to see that everyone agrees on the measures to be taken but he also took notes concerns and will refer them to Commissioner Vella.