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P8_TA(2017)0255

Status of fish stocks and socio-economic situation of the fishing sector in the Mediterranean

European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2017 on the status of fish stocks and the socio-economic situation of the fishing sector in the Mediterranean (2016/2079(INI))

(2018/C 331/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC ⁽¹⁾ (CFP Regulation),
 - 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) ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 of 21 December 2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea, amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1626/94 ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999 ⁽⁴⁾ (IUU Regulation),
 - having regard to the Mid-term strategy (2017-2020) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2016 on the proposal for a Council directive implementing the Agreement concluded between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (COGECA), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises (EUROPÉCHE) of 21 May 2012 as amended on 8 May 2013 concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, of the International Labour Organisation ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard the UN Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 entitled 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development',
 - having regard to the Regional Conference on 'Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea' held in Algiers, Algeria on 7-9 March 2016,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0179/2017),
- A. whereas the Mediterranean, with its 17 000 maritime species, is one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity in the world; whereas a multi-species approach therefore needs to be taken when deciding how it should be managed;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 409, 30.12.2006, p. 11.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0343.

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- B. whereas, in its communication entitled ‘Consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2017 under the Common Fisheries Policy’ (COM(2016)0396), the Commission maintains that overfishing remains prevalent in the Mediterranean and that urgent measures are needed to reverse this situation; whereas in the same text the Commission expresses concern that many of the assessed stocks are being fished considerably above the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) target estimates;
- C. whereas, for all stocks and by 2020 at the latest, the Mediterranean has to respond to the major challenge of achieving the objective of progressively restoring and maintaining fish stock populations above biomass levels capable of producing the maximum sustainable yield; whereas this challenge will require the participation and commitment of non-EU countries; whereas the overall level of overfishing in the Mediterranean Basin is, broadly speaking, between 2 and 3 times the FMSY; whereas, despite the considerable efforts made both within and outside the EU to ensure implementation of and compliance with legislation in the fisheries sector, over 93 % of the assessed species in the Mediterranean are still regarded as being overfished;
- D. whereas fisheries in this region are of great socio-economic importance to coastal populations; whereas the sector employs hundreds of thousands of people, including through the secondary processing sector, with a substantial number of women, in particular, depending on fisheries for employment; whereas the Mediterranean makes a vital contribution in safeguarding food security, particularly for the region’s most vulnerable populations; whereas fisheries offer a way of supplementing income and food supplies and contribute to regional stability;
- E. whereas the Mediterranean Sea is affected by a range of factors — such as pollution caused by maritime transport — which, together with fishing, have an impact on the health of fish stocks;
- F. whereas small-scale fisheries (SSF) account for 80 % of fleets and 60 % of jobs in the Mediterranean basin; whereas it is regrettable that there is no commonly agreed definition of SSF at European level, although this is a difficult task given the variety of specificities and characteristics in the marine ecosystem and fishing sector; whereas ‘small-scale coastal fishing’ is formally defined only for the purposes of the European Fisheries Fund (Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006) as ‘fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 metres and not using towed gear’ (such as trawls); whereas the definition of small-scale fishing should take account of a range of national and regional characteristics;
- G. whereas at the high-level meeting held in Catania in February 2016 on the status of stocks in the Mediterranean, an agreement was reached on the urgent need to reverse these negative trends, and there was acknowledgement of the major challenge of restoring and maintaining fish stock populations above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields, while complying with the CFP obligation relating to MSY for all species, by 2020 at the latest;
- H. whereas, in addition to overfishing, the Mediterranean sea is facing numerous challenges, the majority of which can be attributed to a densely populated coastline (excess of nutrients, pollutants, habitat and coastline alterations) but also to maritime transport and the overexploitation of resources, including oil and gas harvesting, among others; whereas the Mediterranean is, furthermore, very vulnerable to climate change, which, in addition to intense maritime traffic, is facilitating the introduction and establishment of new invasive species;
- I. whereas the impossibility of using specific gears and techniques — which are more acceptable and which have a smaller impact on the status of endangered stocks — has a serious effect on the viability of already marginalised coastal and island communities, hinders development and causes increased depopulation;
- J. whereas coastal communities throughout the Mediterranean Member States are highly dependent on fisheries and SSFs in particular, and are thus jeopardised by the lack of sustainability of fish stocks;

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- K. whereas there are a large number of coastal communities in the EU which are largely dependent on traditional, artisanal and small-scale fisheries activities in the Mediterranean Basin;
- L. whereas recreational fishing is of socio-economic value in many regions of the Mediterranean and has both a direct and an indirect impact on employment;
- M. whereas account needs to be taken of the role that recreational fishing plays with regard to the state of stocks in the Mediterranean;
1. Stresses the importance of comprehensively enforcing, in the short term, the targets and measures laid down in the CFP, and of a timely drafting and effective implementation of the multiannual management plans in line with an approach centred on regionalisation and a multiplicity of species; stresses, in particular, the need to achieve the Good Environmental Status (GES) goal established by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC), taking into account that fisheries management measures should be decided in the context of the CFP;
 2. Takes the view that the Mediterranean should continue to receive differential treatment by comparison with the remaining sea basins under the CFP, since much of it comprises international waters in which third countries play a decisive role with regard to the state of stocks;
 3. Considers it urgent to provide a response that is collective and based on multi-tier international, European, national and regional cooperation; considers that all relevant stakeholders, including professional and recreational fishermen, the fishing industry, traditional and artisanal small-scale fishing, scientists, regional organisations, managers of marine-protected areas, trade unions and NGOs, should be involved in an inclusive, bottom-up process; emphasises the strategic role of the Mediterranean Advisory Council in this context;
 4. Stresses that without the awareness, full support and involvement of the coastal communities, who must be informed about the dangers of depleting stocks and species for the sake of their socio-economic future, the management measures and regulations will not fulfil their full potential;
 5. Notes that there are no common, detailed definitions for small and artisanal fisheries; stresses that such definitions are needed at EU level as soon as possible, for use in further political action;
 6. Maintains that where fisheries are concerned, policymaking should be such as to enable fishers and their associations and producers' organisations, trade unions, Coastal Action Groups (CAGs) and local communities to be involved in — and made an integral part of — decision-taking processes, in line with the CFP's regionalisation principle and including third countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin; stresses that only by creating fair, balanced and equitable conditions for all the countries involved and for all fishing operators in the Mediterranean will it be possible to ensure healthy fishery resources and sustainable and profitable fisheries, and hence to maintain current levels of employment and ideally create more jobs in the fishing sector; underlines the important role of strong and independent social partners in the fishing sector, as well as of an institutionalised social dialogue and the participation of employees in company matters;
 7. Notes that the CFP provides incentives, including fishing opportunities, for fishing selectively and in a manner that ensures a limited impact on the marine ecosystem and fishery resources; stresses, in that respect the need for Member States to apply transparent and objective criteria, including environmental, social and economic criteria (Article 17 of the CFP Regulation); urges that efforts should be made in this direction to ensure that more incentives and preferential access to coastal fishing areas are given to small-scale (artisanal and traditional) fleets if they fish selectively and in a manner that has a limited impact; stresses the importance of consulting the coastal communities concerned;
 8. Observes that the influence of recreational fishing on stocks and its socio-economic potential in the Mediterranean have not been sufficiently studied; considers that, in future, data should be gathered on the number of recreational fishermen, the volume of their catches and the value added by them in coastal communities;
 9. Notes that recreational fishing generates a high economic revenue for the local communities, through activities like tourism, and has a low environmental impact and should thus be encouraged;

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10. Considers it vital to define coastal, small-scale coastal and traditional fishing in line with socio-economic characteristics, while applying a regional approach;
11. Stresses that coastal fishing uses traditional gears and techniques which, by virtue of their specific characteristics, define the identity and way of life of coastal regions, and that it is therefore vital to preserve their use and protect them as an element of cultural, historical and traditional heritage;
12. Considers that, in the context of regionalisation, and taking account of the specificities of each fishing type, certain justified derogations concerning the use of specific fishing gears and techniques should be permitted;
13. Stresses that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), a precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of living marine resources should be applied, which takes into account socio-economic considerations in order to achieve sustainable fisheries, while protecting and preserving the marine environment as a whole; stresses that the lack of scientific information must not be an excuse for failing to implement conservation and management measures; considers it vital to swiftly remedy the lack of data and tangible scientific information about the status of stocks; stresses that all stakeholders should be consulted and involved in this process;
14. Takes the view that, in order to protect and safeguard Mediterranean fisheries and environmental resources, fisheries management policies must be effective and backed up by strong, wide-ranging and urgent policies and measures to counter the factors that affect and have an adverse impact on those resources, such as: climate change (global warming, acidification, rainfall), pollution (chemical, organic, macro- and microscopic), uncontrolled gas and oil exploration and extraction, maritime transport, invasive species and the destruction or alteration of natural habitats, especially coastal; stresses the importance, therefore, of better understanding the impact of those factors on fish stocks; calls for existing European capacities for observing and monitoring the Mediterranean sea, such as EMODnet, and the Copernicus programme and its marine component, to be strengthened in this regard;
15. Considers that protecting and safeguarding fisheries resources and marine resources in the Mediterranean basin should not be based only on measures relating to the fishing industry but should also involve other sectors of activity which have an impact on the marine environment;
16. Takes the view that efforts in the field of marine knowledge should be stepped up, with particular regard to commercially exploited species, and that this knowledge should be used as the basis for planning their sustainable exploitation;
17. Stresses firmly that an extensive problem of illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing still persists in the Mediterranean Basin, even in EU countries; considers that no intervention to safeguard resources, including and above all for small-scale fisheries economies, can be effective unless IUU fishing is combatted firmly and decisively; believes that the EU needs to secure the support of non-EU Mediterranean countries for its efforts to combat IUU fishing; believes, furthermore, that inspection procedures should be harmonised throughout the Mediterranean basin accordingly, in view of the widely divergent application of inspection and penalty procedures;
18. Reiterates that coastal communities have a big influence on the efficiency of measures targeting the prevention, detection and identification of IUU fishing;
19. Considers it a matter of priority to step up monitoring activity both on land, throughout the entire distribution chain (markets and catering trade), and at sea, especially in areas in which fishing is temporarily suspended or prohibited;
20. Takes the view that, in order to avoid social inequalities, fishing opportunities should be allocated using objective and transparent criteria, including environmental, social and economic criteria, with due consideration given to low-impact methods; considers that fishing opportunities should also be fairly distributed within the various fisheries segments, including traditional and small-scale fishing; takes the view, moreover, that incentives should be provided for fleets to use more selective fishing equipment and techniques that have a reduced impact on the marine environment, in keeping with Article 17 of the CFP Regulation;

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21. Takes the view that the depletion of stocks in the Mediterranean should be tackled through fisheries management and conservation measures for commercial and recreational fisheries, including, mainly, through area and time-based restrictions and daily or weekly fishing limits, as well as quotas, where appropriate; considers that doing so would guarantee a level playing field with third countries for shared stocks; believes that these measures should be decided in close cooperation with the sector concerned in order to ensure efficient implementation;

22. Welcomes the increase in the number of inspections carried out by the European Fisheries Control Agency and stresses the need to strengthen efforts to tackle the two major compliance problems in 2016, namely: the false declaration of documents (logbooks, landing and transfer declarations, sales notes, etc.) and the use of prohibited or non-compliant fishing gear;

23. Stresses that fishers should on no account be left to shoulder the responsibilities deriving from the landing obligation laid down in the reformed CFP;

24. Calls for a study to be made of the consequences that the end of fishery discards will have in terms of depriving marine organisms and other species such as gulls of nutrients;

25. Notes that the system of marine-protected areas in the Mediterranean covers an inadequate area, with major coverage disparities between the various basins; points out that there is a general shortage of economic resources; considers it crucial to recognise and enhance the role that marine-protected areas already play as advanced laboratories for scientific research, for the implementation of specific measures and for cooperation and shared management with fishermen, and to optimise their use, in the light of scientific advice and conservation objectives; considers it important, in this respect, to secure a stable increase in funding for the system; considers it crucial to cooperate more closely with the GFCM and non-EU countries with a view to identifying areas to be covered by protection measures, and to establish an effective monitoring and control system to check the effectiveness of those areas;

26. Stresses the importance of ensuring that marine-protected areas cover at least 10 % of the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.5; invites the GFCM to agree on a progressive calendar during the 2018 Annual Session with qualified objectives for achieving this target; stresses that in many cases the existing protected sea areas are not properly managed; considers, therefore, that in addition to introducing an effective monitoring and control system, it is necessary to develop and apply management measures in accordance with the ecosystem approach in order to be able to monitor the effectiveness of the protection measures;

27. Stresses, in particular, the need to protect cooperation in the management of sensitive areas that represent important spawning grounds for the most economically important species (e.g. the Jabuka Pit in the Adriatic Sea);

28. Stresses that the Mediterranean is characterised by a biologically unique population that is exploited by fleets from various countries, and that close cooperation and coordination of measures to regulate fishing among all stakeholders and on all levels are thus vital;

29. Calls on the Commission and the Member-States to take measures to address the problem of marine litter and plastics in the sea, which cause very severe environmental, ecological, economic and health damage;

30. Considers it vital for policies to take a varied and nuanced approach, within management plans, and employ different criteria based on the biological characteristics of the species and technical characteristics of the fishing methods; considers, moreover, that every multiannual plan should provide for appropriate planning in space ('no fishing' areas on a rotational basis, total or partial closures depending on fishing systems) and time (biological recovery periods), in addition to the promotion of technical measures aimed at maximum gear selectivity; stresses that appropriate financial compensation should be envisaged;

31. Welcomes the undertakings given by the Commission in relation to a multiannual management plan for the Mediterranean Sea; stresses the importance of regionalisation of the CFP for the management of fisheries in the Mediterranean basin; calls for the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC) to be involved throughout the process of planning and establishing the multiannual management plan and regionalised measures;

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32. Stresses that fishermen must be guaranteed a decent income during biological rest periods;
33. Emphasises that in the Mediterranean a minimum permitted size should be adopted for all commercial and recreational targeted species, depending on sexual maturity and based on the best scientific knowledge available; points out that measures should be taken to enforce these minimum permitted sizes more strictly;
34. Believes that coordinated action with third countries from the Mediterranean needs to be encouraged by stepping up political and technical cooperation under the aegis of international institutions active in this area; welcomes the recent launch of the Commission's MedFish4Ever programme — a call for action to halt the depletion of fish stocks in the Mediterranean; stresses the need to do all in our power under this programme to promote sustainable fisheries in the Mediterranean countries;
35. Stresses the need to promote and implement an agreement for time-area closures imposing temporary sequential limits on fishing in the breeding areas of certain species throughout the year; points out that this seasonalisation and specialisation of fishing efforts will be highly productive and should be scheduled with the agreement of fishing communities and scientific advisers;

Measures in respect of third countries

36. Calls on the Commission to promote measures through the GFCM to improve the status of stocks shared with third countries, while also taking advantage of the cooperation activities already established between bodies representing fleets and those representing undertakings operating in the fishing industry and the corresponding authorities or bodies of the third countries concerned;
37. Notes that the lack of a common regulatory framework for EU and non-EU fleets operating in the Mediterranean creates unfair competition between fishermen, while at the same time jeopardising long-term catch sustainability for shared species;
38. Stresses the importance of cooperation and the need to promote compliance and a level playing field in fisheries control with third countries and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and to strengthen horizontal coordination for the management of marine areas and fish stocks beyond national jurisdictions;
39. Calls on the Commission to assist non-EU Mediterranean countries to achieve sustainable fisheries, by supporting small-scale and coastal fisheries, sharing best practices and keeping an open channel of communication, and to establish the necessary dialogue between the different national administrations involved in order to adequately support the implementation of the GFCM mid-term strategy (2017-2020) and reverse the alarming trend in the status of Mediterranean stocks; calls on the Commission to organise effective information exchange with third countries in the Mediterranean concerning the activities of third-country fleets operating in the Mediterranean;
40. Calls for the establishment of a regional plan under the aegis of the GFCM, with a view to ensuring equal conditions for all vessels fishing in the Mediterranean area and ensuring that a fair balance is struck between fishing resources and the fleet capacity of all countries on the Mediterranean shore; calls, furthermore, for the establishment of a regional centre for the vessel monitoring system (VMS) and joint inspection operations;
41. Recommends that the Commission suspend imports from third countries which do not take the necessary measures to prevent, discourage and eradicate IUU fishing which are required of them by international law as flag, port, coastal or market states;
42. Calls on Member States and the Commission to support, give all possible assistance to and work together with third countries to better fight IUU in the whole Mediterranean;

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43. Urges riparian states to cooperate in order to establish fisheries-restricted and marine-protected areas, including in international waters;

44. Stresses the need to lay down a set of ground rules for the management of recreational fisheries throughout the Mediterranean;

Socioeconomic aspects

45. Stresses that 250 000 people are directly employed on boats and that the number of people dependent on the fishing industry is exponentially higher if one takes into account families whose subsistence is derived from regional fishing and who are employed in secondary industries, such as processing the upkeep of boats, and tourism, including tourism linked to recreational fisheries; notes that 60 % of work involved in fishing is located in developing countries to the south and east of the Mediterranean, which shows how important small-scale (artisanal and traditional) fishing and recreational fishing are for the sustainable development of those regions and for the most vulnerable coastal communities in particular;

46. Considers an improvement in fishermen's working conditions essential, starting with decent remuneration and fair competition, while special attention should be paid to the industry's high accident rate and high risk of occupational diseases; suggests that Member States establish income support instruments, with due respect for the laws and customs of each Member State; recommends, lastly, that a stable income compensation fund be set up by the Member States to cover non-fishing periods, which can comprise adverse weather phenomena that make fishing impossible, and close seasons (biological rest periods), in order to safeguard the life-cycle of exploited species, environmental disasters, or events involving prolonged environmental pollution or contamination by marine biotoxins;

47. Notes that the EU fishing industry has been going through a difficult period for several years now on account of higher production costs, falling fish stocks, reduced catches and a constant fall in income;

48. Notes that the socio-economic situation in the sector has deteriorated for different reasons, including the decline of fish stocks, the drop in the value of fish at first sale (which has not been reflected in the retail sales price, owing to an unfair distribution of added value along the value chain of the sector by most of the intermediaries and, in some regions, to monopolies on distribution), and the rise in the cost of fuel; notes that these difficulties have contributed to the increase in fishing effort, which is of particular concern in the case of small-scale fishing and may indeed jeopardise the future of this traditional way of life and the survival of local communities that rely heavily on fishing;

49. Underlines the importance of developing initiatives that could have a positive impact on employment and are compatible with the reduction of the fishing effort, such as fishing tourism or research activities;

50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve access to decent working conditions and adequate social protection for all workers in the fishing sector, regardless of the size and type of the enterprise which employs them, the place of employment or the underlying contract, also by using the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements signed in the region to combat social dumping and improve access to markets and finance, cooperation with public administrations and institutions and the diversification of livelihoods; underlines the importance of effective labour inspections and controls;

51. Underlines the need to improve the working conditions of fishers, given the high rate of accidents in the sector as well as the disproportionately high risk of occupational diseases, both physical and mental; stresses the need to ensure a proper work-life balance for fishers; underlines the importance of providing adequate sanitary facilities, both on board fishing vessels and on land, as well as decent accommodation and opportunities for recreational activities; stresses the need to ensure that ports, harbours and waterways remain operationally safe and navigable;

52. Stresses the need to guarantee that every fish and fishery product imported into the EU meets conditions that comply with international environmental, labour and human rights standards; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure fair competition and sustainability in the fishing sector in order to safeguard jobs and growth; stresses that this is essential not only with regard to competition within the Union but also and in particular in relation to competitors based in third countries;

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53. Considers that the Commission and the Member States should promote the complete use of funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument; is of the view that the Commission should do its best to assist both Member States and non-EU states in using all available funds as efficiently as possible, in particular with regard to the following:

- improving working conditions and safety on board;
- enhancing the status of work and vocational training and supporting the emergence and development of new economic activities within the sector through the recruitment, education and multi-disciplinary training of young people;
- enhancing the role of women in fishing and production sectors directly linked to it, in view of the fact that women make up 12 % of the industry's overall labour force;

54. Points out that the EMFF must help the small-scale fishing industry renew its fishing gear, in order, in particular, to meet the severe constraints connected with the landing obligation;

55. Calls on the Commission to encourage the establishment and activities of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) which promote a sustainable fisheries model;

56. Considers it vital to promote, emphasise and provide incentives for cooperation between fishermen, particularly small-scale fishermen within the same area or region, for the purpose of tackling jointly the planning and management of local fisheries resources with the aim of effective and practical regionalisation, in accordance with the aims of the CFP; considers that the enormous fragmentation and differentiation of occupations, targets, technical characteristics and equipment used is a feature peculiar to fishing in the Mediterranean, and a cross-cutting and uniform approach would therefore not respect these local specificities;

57. Observes that, despite the recent improvements, the number of stocks without a reliable assessment of their status remains high and that the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) deplores the fact that the number of assessments has actually fallen, from 44 in 2012 to a mere 15 in 2014; stresses the importance of ensuring rapid and proper data collection and encouraging and supporting an increase in the number of studies and species covered by the data, thus enhancing knowledge on the stocks, the impact of recreational fisheries and external factors such as pollution in order to achieve sustainable stock management;

58. Considers that rational and sustainable management of resources is contingent on the quantity and scientific use of data collected on factors such as fishing capacity, fishing activities engaged in and their socioeconomic situation, and the biological status of the stock exploited;

59. Notes that only 40 % of fish landed in the area covered by the GFCM comes from stocks for which scientific assessments have been submitted to the Commission, and that the percentage is even lower for stocks covered by a management plan; draws attention to the need to improve the scope of scientific assessments of the status of stocks and to increase the percentage of landings accounted for by types of fishing regulated by multiannual management plans;

60. Considers assessments of the fishing effort in recreational fishing and the gathering of catch data in each sea basin and in the Mediterranean to be important;

61. Stresses the need for integrated approaches which take into account simultaneously the heterogeneity of the marine environment, the complexity of species (both exploited and unexploited) in the sea, the various characteristics and the conduct of fishing activities, the phenomenon of the drop in value of fish at first sale and, in some regions, monopolies on distribution, as well as all other factors that have a bearing on the health of fish stocks;

62. Recognises that the data available for measuring the extent and impact of small-scale fishing activities are limited and can vary from country to country; observes that, because of this lack of data, non-industrial fishing tends to be underestimated;

63. Stresses that a better understanding of the economic and social impact of different type of fisheries, especially small-scale and recreational, would help in determining the best management measures;

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64. Strongly supports the proposal by the GFCM to create a catalogue of fishing activities and to include information on fishing gear and operations, a description of fishing areas and an indication of target species and by-catches, for use in providing a complete description of fishing activities in the area and interactions with other sectors, such as recreational fishing;

65. Considers that new rules should be applied to recreational fishing and that a catalogue of recreational fishing activities, including information about fishing gear and operations, a description of fishing areas, target species and by-catches should also be drawn up;

66. Calls on the Commission to promote strong scientific cooperation and to work to improve the gathering of data on the principal stocks, reducing the time lag between the gathering and final assessment of data, and requesting assessments of new stocks from the STECF; strongly deplores the fact that, in the Mediterranean, most landings are of species on which little data is available ('data-deficient fisheries');

67. Stresses the strong and crucial need to share data and combat their inaccessibility and dispersion, by developing a common database with comprehensive and reliable data on fisheries resources and by establishing a network of experts and research institutions covering different domains of fisheries science; stresses that this database should be EU-funded and contain all the data on fisheries and fishing activities by geographical sub-area, including data on recreational fishing, in order to facilitate the monitoring of quality, independent and comprehensive data and thus enhance stock assessments;

68. Notes that the impact, characteristics and scale of IUU fishing are currently not sufficiently assessed, that their appraisal varies from country to country in the Mediterranean basin and that these countries are therefore not correctly represented in the information about the current status of fisheries and about trends over time; stresses that these countries ought to be adequately taken into account in the development of scientific assessments for the purposes of fisheries management;

69. Calls on the Member States to tackle seafood fraud through product labelling and traceability and to increase their efforts to combat illegal fishing; regrets the lack of information available on the state of the majority of stocks ('data-poor stocks') and the fact that around 50 % of catches are not officially declared while 80 % of landings come from 'data-poor stocks';

70. Calls on the Member States to ratify and fully implement all relevant ILO conventions for workers in the fisheries sectors in order to ensure good working conditions, and to strengthen collective bargaining institutions so that maritime workers, including the self-employed, can enjoy their labour rights;

71. Calls on the Commission to encourage and support investments in diversification and innovation in the fisheries sector through the development of complementary activities;

Awareness

72. Stresses that effective results and full accomplishment can be attained by means of a high level of responsibility and awareness among operators in the industry, by developing the skills of all fishermen (both professional and recreational) and educating them, and by involving them in decision-making, adding specific actions for the dissemination of good practices;

73. Believes it important to advocate the mandatory provision of proper consumer information detailing the exact origin of products and the method and date of catch; considers that we need to analyse and assess whether the measures provided for in the new CMO have succeeded in improving consumer information;

74. Considers it important, moreover, to raise awareness among consumers and educate them to consume fish responsibly, by choosing local species fished by sustainable methods, possibly coming from stocks which are not overexploited and not widely sold; considers it necessary, to this end, to promote an effective and reliable traceability and labelling system, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, in order to inform consumers and combat food fraud, *inter alia*;

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75. Believes that a balance must be struck between fair competition, consumer requirements, sustainability of the fishing sector and the maintenance of jobs; stresses the need for a comprehensive approach and a strong political will on the part of all Mediterranean countries in order to face the challenges and improve the situation in the Mediterranean sea;
76. Welcomes the MEDFISH4EVER campaign launched by the Commission with the aim of raising public awareness of the situation in the Mediterranean Sea;
77. Takes the view that schools, hospitals, and other public facilities should be supplied with fish from local fisheries;
78. Stresses that, in the light of this new scenario and of all these new interlinked factors in the Mediterranean, Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 must be revised for the Mediterranean, to bring it into line with the current situation;
79. Points out that Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 must be revised, in particular the part that refers to the ban on the use of certain traditional gears (e.g. banning the use of gillnets outside of the category of commercial fishing) and the provisions that relate to the specific characteristics of fishing gears, such as the height and mesh size of fishing nets, and the depth and distance from the coast at which the gears may be used;
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80. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
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