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B7-0226/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0111/2014

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the status of the North-East Atlantic mackerel fishery
(2014/2529(RSP))

Gabriel Mato Adrover, Pat the Cope Gallagher
on behalf of the Committee on Fisheries

B7-0226/2014

European Parliament resolution on the status of the North-East Atlantic mackerel fishery (2014/2529(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the bilateral fisheries agreement between the EU and Norway adopted under Council Regulation (EEC) No 2214/80,
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,
 - having regard to the UN Agreement for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on the status of the North-East Atlantic mackerel fishery (O-000147/2013 – B7-0111/2014),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas mackerel is a migratory fish that straddles different areas of jurisdiction, from the high seas to the exclusive economic zones of the coastal states, and back to the high seas again;
- B. whereas in January 2010 the EU and Norway entered into a 10-year agreement on mackerel, establishing a stable basis for their relationship regarding this stock; whereas, under the agreement, they agreed to share the burden as regards any new quota share offered to other parties (the Faeroe Islands and Iceland);
- C. whereas the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Agreement for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks lay down that coastal states have both the right to harvest the mackerel fish stock and the obligation to cooperate with other coastal states on the sustainable management of the stock, and that coastal states also have the responsibility of coming to an agreement with each other on total allowable catches (TACs) from the stock in order to ensure sustainability and avoid overfishing;
- D. whereas the management of mackerel fishing started in the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) in 1999, and whereas in 2010 Iceland was accepted as a coastal state, and negotiations started with the EU and Norway on the yearly TACs;
- E. whereas the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, the marine ecosystem and living marine resources in the North Atlantic, and whereas the coastal states that fish for mackerel receive scientific advice from ICES on sustainable fishing

- from the stock;
- F. whereas climate change has greatly influenced the migratory pattern of mackerel, causing them to shift towards the North-East Atlantic; whereas, owing to a large increase in the mackerel stock, it has now expanded into both Icelandic and Faeroese waters;
 - G. whereas Iceland and the Faeroe Islands are adopting unilateral quotas, as a result of not reaching an agreement with the EU and Norway, despite numerous rounds of negotiations having been held; whereas Iceland has unilaterally increased its share of mackerel catches from 1 % in 2006 to 23 % in 2013 and the Faeroe Islands have increased their share of mackerel from 4.6 % in 2009 to 29.3 % in 2013;
 - H. whereas, in the current situation, there is substantial overfishing of mackerel, putting the sustainability of the fishery, and the economic and social sustainability of the catching and processing industry dependent on it, in jeopardy;
 - I. whereas a legal instrument on trade measures to prevent this type of situation was adopted by Parliament and the Council in 2012, under Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012;
 - J. whereas the Faeroe Islands have also withdrawn from the coastal states agreement on Atlanto-Scandian herring and have set a unilateral quota share more than three times larger than their traditional share; whereas subsequently, the Commission implemented Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 with respect to the Faeroe Islands and their overfishing of Atlanto-Scandian herring;
1. Considers that an agreement between the coastal states is highly desirable, both for the long-term sustainability of the stock and the long-term socio-economic interest of the fishing and processing sectors;
 2. Recalls that ICES issued scientific advice concerning mackerel in the North-East Atlantic in October 2013, recommending a large increase of 64 % in the mackerel TAC for 2014, and that new data on mackerel abundance will be available in February-March 2014; notes that ICES has confirmed that the core spawning area for mackerel is the south and north-west of Ireland; points out that all this scientific information may give rise to the possibility of a negotiated settlement of the long-running dispute;
 3. Reminds the Commission that Norway is a key partner of the EU, and that any offer on future sharing arrangements for Iceland and the Faeroes must be previously negotiated and agreed with Norway;
 4. Calls on the Commission to ensure that future sharing arrangements for Iceland and the Faeroes take account of the best available scientific information;
 5. Calls on the Commission to consider all possible options, including the two-tier approach as a possible solution to the dispute, whereby Iceland and the Faeroe Islands would receive a greater share of future mackerel quotas when the stock was in their territorial waters, but when it exited their waters their respective shares would return to their original levels;

- Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission.