



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

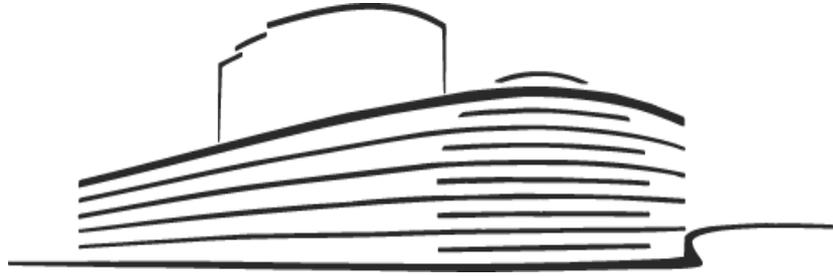
2018 - 2019

## **EXTRACT**

### **FROM THE 'TEXTS ADOPTED' DOCUMENT**

**OF THE PART-SESSION HELD ON**

28 - 31 May 2018





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**TEXTS ADOPTED**

*Provisional edition*

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**P8\_TA-PROV(2018)0210**

**Optimisation of the value chain in the EU fishing sector**

**European Parliament resolution of 29 May 2018 on the optimisation of the value chain in the EU fishing sector (2017/2119(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 42 and 43(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), establishing a common organisation of the markets in fishery products,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2017 on promoting cohesion and development in the outermost regions of the EU: implementation of Article 349 of the TFEU<sup>1</sup>,
- 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, and in particular Article 35 thereof on the objectives of the common organisation of the markets,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, in particular Articles 11, 13, 41 to 44, 48, 63, 66, 68 and 70 to 73 thereof,
- 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 13 June 2017 on the status of fish stocks and the socio-economic situation of the fishing sector in the Mediterranean<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission's new strategy for 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the outermost regions of the European Union' published on 24 October 2017 (COM(2017)0623),

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0316.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0255.

- having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2016 on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 27 April 2017 on the management of the fishing fleets in the outermost regions<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A8-0163/2018),
- A. whereas the EU fishing sector is facing ever-more difficult and complex challenges; whereas the status of resources and the increase in outgoings, particularly variations in the price of fuel, may have a decisive impact on fishermen's incomes; whereas, in this context, downward variations in, and unfair allocation of, fishing quotas mean that local communities face complicated situations owing to the reduction in extractive activities and to the fact that the rules of fair competition are being infringed; whereas, in addition to the increase in transport costs, which result from the double impact of the rise in fuel prices, they face competition from imports of products from third countries; whereas although these and other problems are recognised, the causes of the worsening socio-economic situation in the fisheries sector have, in many cases, still to be tackled, one example being the inadequate first-sale price formation where fish is concerned;
  - B. whereas the fishing sector plays a key role in supplying fish to the public and keeping the Member States' food balances in equilibrium, as well as making a major contribution to the socio-economic well-being of coastal communities, local development, employment, the maintenance and creation of upstream and downstream economic activities, and the preservation of local cultural traditions;
  - C. whereas small-scale, artisanal and coastal fishing account for 83 % of the fishing vessels active in the EU and 47 % of total employment in the EU fisheries sector; whereas Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 states that 'Member States should endeavour to give preferential access for small-scale, artisanal or coastal fishermen' and given that this provision is not complied with;
  - D. whereas compliance with EU regulations has been made mandatory by most distributors of fisheries and aquaculture products such as supermarkets; whereas the impact of such compliance on fishermen's working conditions and incomes varies which can be unfair on smaller fishing vessels;
  - E. whereas it is necessary to allow for the marked differences in terms of fleets, fleet segments, target species, fishing gear, productivity, consumer preferences, and per capita fish consumption in the EU countries, in addition to the specific features of the fishing industry resulting from its social structure, the forms of marketing, and the structural and natural inequalities among fishing regions;
  - F. whereas, in order to gain a foothold in new market segments, traditional fishermen need financial aid and support;
  - G. whereas the revenue generated and the salaries earned by fishing professionals are

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<sup>3</sup> OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0195.

insecure, given the way in which the sector does business, the manner of first-sale price formation, and the irregular nature of fishing, all of which imply that the sector must continue to be supported by the necessary national and EU public funding;

- H. whereas analysing the key points in the value chain for fishery products may lead to fishermen and local producers retaining a larger share of the value generated with the opening up of new local markets and the engaging of local stakeholders, which could contribute positively to local communities, by creating a dynamic, profitable and sustainable economic activity;
- I. whereas Article 349 of the TFEU recognises the special economic and social situation of the outermost regions (ORs), which is compounded by structural factors (remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, dependence on a few products, etc.) the permanence and combination of which severely restrain their development and the value chain in fishing sector;
- J. whereas primary producers, while playing a key role in the value chain, do not always benefit from added value generated in the later stages thereof;
- K. whereas the common fisheries policy (CFP) was designed to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the EU;
- L. whereas one way of guaranteeing that fishery products from the ORs are competitive is to ensure that the price of fish from those regions is not inflated as a result of transport costs when it reaches the main destination markets;
- M. whereas the EU is the world leader in the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products;
- N. whereas trade in fishery and aquaculture products is influenced by many factors, such as consumer preferences in different geographical areas;
- O. whereas the common market organisation (CMO) in fishery and aquaculture products aims to increase the transparency and stability of the markets, in particular as regards economic knowledge and understanding of the markets for EU fishery and aquaculture products along the supply chain;
- P. whereas Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products lays down in its Article 38 the obligation of indication of the catch or production area and, in the case of fishery products caught at sea, the name in writing of the sub-area or division listed in the FAO fishing areas;
- Q. whereas transparency is a means of ensuring the right of consumers to know, with maximum precision, the characteristics of the products that they purchase; whereas, this requires improvements in labelling, with the obligation to feature the same precise information on the origin of the fish both when sold fresh and in processed products;
- R. whereas the current sales dynamic does not allow fluctuations in production factor costs, fuel costs included, to be passed on in fish prices, and whereas average first-sale prices have not kept pace with the trend in end consumer prices;
- S. whereas the study published by the Department on Structural and Cohesion Policies in

2016 entitled ‘Small-scale fisheries markets: value chain, promotion and labelling’ clearly indicates that the labelling of EU fisheries products can confuse the consumer;

- T. whereas fishery producer organisations and aquaculture producer organisations (‘producer organisations’) play a key role in achieving the objectives and ensuring the correct management of the CFP and of the CMO;
- U. whereas the European Union is committed to safeguarding high quality standards in fisheries products in particular in the light of trade relations with the third countries;
- V. whereas the processing and canning industry plays an important role;
- W. whereas fisheries local action groups (FLAGs) are an essential part of the CFP in terms of drawing up and implementing integrated and multisectoral participative local development strategies that meet the needs of their local fishing area; whereas they are recognised to play a useful role in contributing to diversification in fishing activities;
- X. whereas fisheries supply chain does not exist in isolation and building cross-sectorial linkages is of paramount importance to develop innovative products to access new markets and enhance its promotion;
- Y. whereas there is a lack of structure and a lack of association in the fishing sector in some EU Member States;
- Z. whereas fisheries in the ORs face constraints of their own, recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which also affect their structuring;
- AA. whereas inter-branch organisations (as already referred to in the CMO) have the potential to improve the coordination of marketing activities along the supply chain and to push forward with measures that are of interest for the whole sector;
- AB. whereas, since fish stocks are shared resources, their sustainable and efficient exploitation can, in certain instances, be better achieved by organisations composed of members from different EU States and regions and should therefore be approached and studied on region by region basis;
- AC. whereas the fishing sector is central to the socio-economic situation, employment, and the promotion of economic and social cohesion in the ORs, whose economies are affected by permanent structural constraints and which have few possibilities for economic diversification;
- AD. whereas the lack of young professionals is a hindrance for the modernisation and improvement of the sector, and presents a major threat to the survival of many coastal communities;
- AE. whereas the role of women in the fishing sector enjoys a very low profile, whereas although women often provide the backstage work, such as in logistical support or the bureaucracy associated with the activity, they also work as fisherwomen and masters in some fishing vessels;
- AF. whereas the landing obligation represents a real economic and social

constraint, reducing financial viability and having an impact on the value chain which should be minimised;

AG. whereas it is necessary to promote greater consumer awareness of the importance of healthy eating and sustainable production;

AH. whereas diminishing first-sale fish prices and increasing fuel costs must also be considered as contributory factors regarding the worsening social and economic situation;

1. Calls on the Commission and Member States, together with regional authorities, to set up groups of experts whose task will be to analyse and propose corrective measures in relation to the use of the various European Maritime and Fisheries Fund appropriations in order to identify the causes of non-implementation and the possible loss of funds and to ensure an adequate level of control and transparency and to require better management on the part of the relevant administrations;
2. Urges Member States to comply with Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and to offer real preferential access to fishing opportunities to the EU's small-scale and artisanal fleet;
3. Calls on the Commission and Member States to take the necessary action to facilitate the creation of producer organisations, removing the bureaucratic hurdles in the procedure established and lowering the minimum production thresholds to encourage the entry of small producers; points out that it is also necessary to boost the activities of producer organisations, further empowering them and facilitating access to the necessary financial support so that they can carry out a wider variety of tasks in addition to day-to-day fisheries management, while respecting a framework defined by the objectives of the CFP, particularly for the ORs, which must be able to locally adapt the functioning of producer organisations and inter-branch organisations in their territories, which are characterised by remoteness, isolation, small size, the prevalence of small-scale fishing and a high degree of vulnerability to imports;
4. Maintains that operational programmes must encourage producer organisations – by providing the necessary financial support – to market their products directly, working within the value chain, since this would enable them to exploit their production and increase the added value of fishery products;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that aid for health and safety on board should not be part of a competitive process and that an increased budget be assigned to the artisanal fisheries sector;
6. Calls on the Commission and Member States to help and encourage producer organisations to include the value chain in production and marketing plans, with the aim of adapting supply to demand, securing a fair income for fishermen and ensuring that European consumers find products that meet their needs, taking account of differences; points out that, in this context, marketing strategies tailored to specific local features are an essential tool, must include the option of direct selling, and would embrace sectoral and/or product-based campaigns and help to improve consumer information and awareness, including marking and labelling that provides comprehensible information;

7. Calls on the Commission, Member States, regional and local governments to empower small-scale fisheries by encouraging local consumption through direct and more specialised marketing, zero-kilometre channels of trade, including improved cooperation between the public sector and the fisheries sector through the supply of public establishments such as schools and hospitals with local fish products, as well as promotional campaigns that should also cooperate with private initiatives to promote local food products, such as the Slow Fish initiative, and to respect the seasonality of certain catches; at the same time invites the Commission and the Member States to support the cooperation between the fishing and tourism sectors and to draw up a list of good practices on experiences facilitating new forms of collaboration;
8. Stresses that one of the foundations of these marketing strategies is the mandatory indication on labels of the origin of fishery products, both when sold fresh and processed;
9. Calls for systems to be set up with a view to improving first-sale prices, so as to benefit fishermen by increasing the reward for their work, and promoting fair and proper distribution of added value along the sector's value chain by reducing operating margins, raising the prices paid to producers, and limiting the prices paid by end consumers; reiterates that when there are serious imbalances within the chain, Member States should have the power to intervene, for instance by setting maximum operating margins for each agent in the chain;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to help the movement of EU small-scale fishers' organisations with the development of a dedicated logo which guarantees: a fresh fish product, excellent quality, controlled health standards, compliance with km 0 requirements (favouring local products over products transported from far away), close to consumers, in-line with traditions, etc.;
11. Notes that, for the purposes of transparency and to safeguard the rights of consumers, it will be necessary to revise the Annex to Regulation (EEC) No 1536/92 concerning the marketing of preserved products;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to put in place a system for the labelling of fish, both fresh and processed, clearly indicating the country of origin;
13. Urges Member States to promote a greater degree of structure and association in the fishing sector;
14. Urges the Commission to include a clause in trade agreements with third countries in relation to EU quality standards, requiring that imports comply with the same rules as EU fishing products;
15. In order to ensure a level-playing field between imported and EU fisheries and aquaculture products, calls on the Commission and the Member States to strictly monitor the compliance

of products imported into the Union with current EU safety, hygiene and quality requirements, as well as with Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008<sup>5</sup> on IUU fishing;

16. Insists on a stricter implementation of the EU legislation on labelling and consumer information, both in retail markets and in the hotel, restaurant and catering sector (HORECA); believes this is important for all fisheries products, both imported and EU-produced; considers that the implementation of the Control Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 should be reinforced to this end in all Member States and that regulations should be adapted to cover all stages of the supply chain;
17. Encourages the Commission to conduct a study on the impact of imports on local fisheries;
18. Calls on the Commission to allow appropriate use to be made of regionalisation, with particular attention to the ORs, and a differentiation of support instruments, and for it to be possible for these to be adapted to different types of producer organisations and their specific needs;
19. Stresses the importance of developing policies enabling local coastal communities to offer integrated services, exploiting synergies arising from the various production sectors and likely to bring about and encourage development at the local level; insists therefore on combining funding from the CFP with other European programmes in the European Social Fund or the CAP; stresses that this combination of resources and programmes should support initiatives by local communities and entrepreneurs focused on rural development, improving living conditions, and helping to consolidate income and in particular to diversify sources of income;
20. Considers it crucial for support for the transport of fish from the ORs, up until it reaches the international market, to be maintained and preferably increased so as to guarantee fair competition with products from other locations;
21. Calls on the Commission to look into the possibility of creating, as soon as possible, a financial instrument specifically to provide support for fisheries, on the basis of POSEI for the agricultural sector in the ORs, with the capacity genuinely to enhance their fisheries potential believes that consideration should be given to the possibility of bringing together in this specific instrument, in particular, the provisions of Article 8 (State aid), Article 13(5) (Budgetary resources under shared management), Article 70 (Compensation regime), Article 71 (Calculation of the compensation), Article 72 (Compensation plan) and Article 73 (State aid for implementing compensation plans) of the Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
22. Considers that such local development plans for coastal communities should support new activities and businesses making it possible to bring high-quality raw materials, the communities' specific transformation processes and their cultural and historical heritage all together in the value chain. Notes, moreover, that they should promote

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<sup>5</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1).

marketing mechanisms, such as the compulsory labelling of product origin, that help to raise the profile of these qualities in the marketplace and that ensure that the greater part of the income generated reverts to these communities;

23. Stresses, further, the importance of the sea, of marine resources and of fisheries products in promoting cohesion and development in the ORs and in the implementation of Article 349 of the TFEU urges the Commission, in this context, to respect Article 349 of the TFEU, also in relation to fisheries, by fully reinstating the independent POSEI-Fisheries scheme, which was abolished as part of the reform of the current EMFF;
24. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, and regional and local authorities to encourage the establishment of inter-branch organisations, as well as producer organisations and associations of producer organisations at transnational level (as envisaged in the CMO), based on biogeographical regions or at EU level; points out that this is an essential tool for empowering producer organisations and giving them greater negotiating power;
25. Calls for this process to be fostered with special emphasis on gender policies, with a view to ensuring that women are adequately represented in these organisations. Notes that this would both reflect women's current presence in the sector and help them play a greater role in it;
26. Stresses the importance to strengthen the cooperation between science and fisheries to address the complicated dependencies and weaknesses in the value chain processes in order to improve and bring profit to the stakeholders;
27. Calls on the Commission to expand, promote and generalise the use of the information provided by the EU Market Observatory for fisheries and aquaculture products (EUMOFA) so that all operators in the chain have transparent, reliable and up-to-date information for efficient business decision-making; urges the Commission accordingly to obtain updated information regarding the new challenges facing traders, such as online sales or changes in consumption habits;
28. Points to the need for ambitious revision of the CMO for fishery products with a view to increasing its contribution to the sector's income, market stability, and better marketing of fishery products and an increase in their added value;
29. Asks the Commission to include fisheries products in its forthcoming proposal for regulations to combat unfair trade practices, which are a general problem in the food products sector;
30. Urges the Commission to review the system for labelling fisheries products laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013, based on FAO fishing areas which were drawn up more than 70 years ago for reporting catches and not designed to provide consumer guidance, given that the system is confusing and not conducive to the provision of clear, transparent and straightforward information;
31. Calls on the Commission and the Member States and regional and local authorities to look into the lack of professional qualifications in the fishing sector, and of young specialists in particular, so that training programmes for people working in the fishing

sector can be guaranteed and tailored to the sector's actual needs, thereby helping to modernise and improve the sector and retain the population in fishing communities as well as to create appropriate job opportunities in aquaculture, rural and coastal areas, in the ORs as well as regions depending on fisheries activities;

32. Points to the importance of setting up home markets for traditional products of particular quality, to be backed up by fairs, small businesses, and the catering industry, as this would enhance the added value of local products and promote local development;
33. Stresses the importance of drawing up specific digital skills training strategies focusing on management and, especially, sales as a basic tool to improve the position of producers in the value chain;
34. Points out that these training plans must both cover traditional occupations practised within the sector, mainly by women, and specific plans focused on increasing women's employability and entrepreneurship. Stresses that the inclusion of these features in accredited training courses must also have the consequent legal effects and improve the status of these professionals in the labour market;
35. Calls on the Commission to consider better ways to promote the marketing of processed fishery products with higher added value, including canned products, following the example certain agricultural products, and programmes for the external promotion of EU fishery products, including their presentation at international competitions and fairs;
36. Urges the Member States and regional authorities to help economic actors of the Fisheries sector in accessing the knowledge, networks and funding required to undertake innovative activities and design new products ('novel foods') in particular in the valuation of species already captured with little economic value, and involve research organisations and institutions, such as oceanographic institutes, in order to benefit from their extensive knowledge of the basic raw materials and their biological, nutritional and organoleptic properties; in an effort to avoid waste, maximize the value of fresh products and stimulate synergies between different parts of the value chain and make the sector more resilient;
37. Asks Member States and local and regional authorities to work together to develop effective, specifically product-oriented consumer-information campaigns to raise awareness of issues such as the importance of consuming local fisheries products, to ensure that the sector's impact on local employment and the social cohesion of coastal communities can be visualised, highlight the nutritional qualities of fresh fish and raise awareness of the need to include fisheries products in a healthy diet, etc.;
38. Asks the Commission to propose a clear definition and sketch the foundations for a future European programme to support small-scale fishing that will help to improve the environmental and socio-economic sustainability of the fishing sector in the EU, that will make it possible to identify, differentiate and enhance the value of products from small-scale fishing in order to promote consumption of those products, and that will encourage new generations to work in the fishing sector so as to produce a generational renewal, ensuring decent quotas for small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen and greater control of resources, thereby increasing social cohesion in the EU's coastal communities;

39. Calls on the Commission to launch specific EU level public online consultations to collect data concerning the supply chain, market transparency issues, value sharing, labelling and consumer needs from broad range of stakeholders in the EU fishing sector;
40. Calls on the Commission to explore the benefits that global value chains might offer for small-scale fishing and that might help it to integrate more easily into the global economy, increasing the added value of its products while making it possible to maintain its activity and that of local communities; stresses the importance of digital skills training to that end;
41. Believes that the value chain of fisheries products is complex, going from producers through various middlemen to the retailer or restaurant; highlights that fish brokers and fish processors play an important role in the value chain; notes that, on average, the margin in the value chain is that only 10 % go to the producers, and the remaining 90 % are for the intermediaries; underlines that the shortening of the value chain, notably through the establishment of producer organisations which are key players through their production and marketing plans, is an initial vehicle to improving the income of the small-scale fishers, but also of getting a better product (probably at a better price) to the consumer;
42. Stresses the importance of investing in young professionals in order to engage and empower the next generation of fishermen and calls for creating opportunities for young fishermen so that they develop new skills, build resilient businesses, be active members of their local communities and positively contribute to the value chain in the fishing sector;
43. Calls on Member States and regional authorities to make use of the opportunities offered by FLAG support with a view to adapting operations to local needs in a large number of areas such as training and diversification of activities based on innovation, among many others and in assisting fishermen and members of local communities in accessing existing EU support programmes and funding;
44. Calls on the Commission to investigate the possibility of establishing a process to make use of by-catches linked to the landing obligation in the economic and social interests of players in the value chain, especially fishermen, and by supporting local initiatives;
45. Calls on the Member States and regional authorities to boost the transfer of information on existing support schemes and strengthen administrative support, for example by means of information platforms;
46. Calls on the Commission to promote and support initiatives promoting greater selectivity in order to reduce by-catches and ultimately improve the financial viability of fisheries by targeting species that meet consumers' expectations;
47. Urges the Commission and Member States to include the gender approach in fisheries policies so that the significant role played by women in the EU fishing sector becomes more visible and so as to enhance their position;
48. Calls on the Commission and Member States to create closer links between the world of work and schools, for example by providing for the inclusion of subjects relating to

fisheries and aquaculture in the training courses offered by institutes of maritime technology;

49. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the regional authorities to pool their efforts to implement the activities proposed in this report with a view to making fishing activities more profitable;
50. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the governments of the Member States, and the Advisory Councils.



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