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REPORT

on a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of
European Aquaculture
(2009/2107(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Guido Milana

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture (2009/2107(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Building a sustainable future for aquaculture - a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture’ (COM(2009)0162),
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 710/2009 of 5 August 2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as regards laying down detailed rules on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production¹,
- having regard to the Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture (COM(2009)0541),
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 257/2009 of 24 March 2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 794/2004 as regards the supplementary information sheet for notification of aid to fisheries and aquaculture²,
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 248/2009 of 19 March 2009 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 as regards notifications concerning recognition of producer organisations, the fixing of prices and intervention within the scope of the common organisation of the market in fishery and aquaculture products (recast)³,
- having regard to Council Directive 2006/88/EC, as regards requirements for quarantine of aquaculture animals⁴, and to Commission Decision 2008/946/EC of 12 December 2008 implementing this directive⁵,
- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy⁶,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel⁷,

¹ OJ L 204, 6.8.2009, p. 15.

² OJ L 81, 27.3.2009, p. 15.

³ OJ L 79, 25.3.2009, p. 7.

⁴ OJ L 328, 24.11.2006, p. 14.

⁵ OJ L 337, 16.12.2008, p. 94.

⁶ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.

⁷ OJ L 27, 31.1.2010, p. 1.

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products¹,
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EU) No 271/2010 of 24 March 2010 amending Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as regards the organic production logo of the European Union²,
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008 of 12 December 2008 implementing Council Directive 2006/88/EC as regards conditions and certification requirements for the placing on the market and the import into the Community of aquaculture animals and products thereof and laying down a list of vector species³,
- having regard to the Commission Communications entitled ‘Guidelines for an Integrated Approach to Maritime Policy: Towards best practice in integrated maritime governance and stakeholder consultation’ (COM(2008)0395), ‘Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning: Achieving Common Principles in the EU’ (COM(2008)0791) and ‘Developing the international dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union’ (COM(2009)0536), and to the recent Progress Report on the EU’s Integrated Maritime Policy (COM(2009)0540),
- having regard to the Scientific Reports and Opinions produced by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2008 on the welfare of six of the main fish species farmed in the EU and to the Scientific Opinions produced by EFSA in 2009 on the welfare at slaughter of eight farmed fish species,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2010⁴ on the Commission Green Paper on reform of the common fisheries policy (COM(2009)0163),
- having regard to its resolution of 4 December 2008⁵ on the adoption of a European Cormorant Management Plan,
- having regard to its resolution of 2 September 2008⁶ on Fisheries and Aquaculture in the context of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 31 January 2008⁷ on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the submission by Member States of statistics on aquaculture,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2007⁸ on the common organisation of the market in the fisheries and aquaculture products sector,

¹ OJ L 189, 20.7.2007, p. 1.

² OJ L 84, 31.3.2010, p. 19.

³ OJ L 337, 16.12.2008, p. 41.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0039.

⁵ OJ C 21E, 28.1.2010, p. 11.

⁶ OJ C 295E, 4.12.2009, p. 1.

⁷ OJ C 68E, 21.3.2009, p. 39.

⁸ OJ C 323E, 18.12.2008, p. 271.

- having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2006¹ on launching a debate on a Community approach towards eco-labelling schemes for fisheries products,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2003² on aquaculture in the European Union: present and future,
 - having regard to the Guidelines for the examination of State aid to fisheries and aquaculture³ and the Acceptance of the Guidelines by Member States⁴,
 - having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and its resolution of 7 May 2009 on Parliament's new role and responsibilities in implementing the Treaty of Lisbon⁵,
 - having regard to the report of the fourth Session of the FAO Sub-Committee on Aquaculture⁶,
 - having regard to the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries⁷,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A7-0150/2010),
- A. whereas at present there is no specific, harmonised EU legislative framework for the aquaculture sector; whereas this sector is instead covered by a variety of EU legislative texts in different areas (environment, public health, etc.) and national legislation which may vary considerably from one Member State to another, thereby creating confusion among operators in the sector, in addition to causing discrimination and distortions of the market,
- B. whereas, in this context, the most appropriate step is for the Commission to propose a regulation laying down rules for the aquaculture sector and thus introducing the necessary legislative clarity,
- C. whereas the aquaculture sector is an innovative, potentially high-technology economic sector requiring intensive structural and research investment, long-term operational and financial planning, and hence legal certainty and clear and stable legislative frameworks,
- D. whereas the aquaculture sector directly interacts with policy areas which are of prime importance to our society, such as the environment, tourism, urban planning, regional development, public health and consumer protection; whereas it is therefore essential that due consideration be given to the sector's interests and that it be treated fairly,

¹ OJ C 305E, 14.12.2006, p. 233..

² OJ C 38E, 12.2.2004, p. 318.

³ OJ C 84 , 3.4.2008, p. 10.

⁴ OJ C 115, 20.5.2009, p. 15.

⁵ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2009)0373.

⁶ Meeting in Puerto Varas (Chile) on 6-10 October 2008, <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/36393/en>

⁷ FAO Code of Conduct adopted on 31 October 1995.

- E. whereas all forms of aquaculture must be sustainable and socially just and, consequently, no harm must be done to ecosystems through an increase in the concentrations of natural substances and in the concentrations of substances produced by humans, such as non-degradable chemicals and carbon dioxide, and through physical disturbance,
- F. whereas the 2002 Commission Communication has proved clearly inadequate in encouraging Member States to give a significant boost to the development of the EU aquaculture sector, while the past decade has seen a substantial growth of the sector worldwide, in addition to a rise in the demand for fishery products, from both farmed and wild fish, with a sharp increase in imports of such products from non-EU countries,
- G. whereas the EU is a net importer of fishery and aquaculture products, and the demand for these products is increasing both globally, due to the growing world population, and at Community level due to the past and future accession to the EU of countries in which this trend in demand is even more accentuated, as well as because consumption patterns are changing towards foods based on healthier products,
- H. whereas, furthermore, a reliable certification system for aquaculture products is needed,
- I. whereas the Community's sustainable aquaculture sector can make a major contribution to ensuring high-quality food supplies as regards fish products, and thus to reducing the pressure on wild species by diversifying the supply of fisheries and aquaculture products, as well as playing an important role as regards food security, economic activities and employment, especially in rural and coastal regions,
- J. whereas the EU should therefore accord the sustainable aquaculture sector and its development at EU level greater strategic importance, providing it with the necessary financial aid, bearing in mind that the high technology required by aquaculture activities often entails substantial investment by companies, whatever their size,
- K. whereas, given the importance of developing the aquaculture sector, the Commission is urged to ring-fence a portion of the European Fisheries Fund for that purpose; whereas the relevant instruments will need to be sufficiently flexible and effective to secure the development of the sector, including scientific research,
- L. whereas the considerable research and technological innovation required to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of aquaculture and enable operators to be successful in the sector is beyond the possibilities of many companies in the sector, regardless of whether these are SMEs or large enterprises,
- M. whereas, in order to be effective, a sustainable aquaculture policy will need to be structured in such a way as to benefit and promote the multidisciplinary and coordinated involvement of all sectors related to the activity,
- N. whereas the EU is already applying a policy of support for organic agriculture and aquaculture products through the implementation of Regulations 834/2007, 889/2008 and 710/2009, as the key to a European sustainable aquaculture sector, closely linked to

optimising its own product to make it more competitive and to improve consumer protection as well as information and freedom of choice for consumers,

- O. whereas any sustainable aquaculture policy, whether at Community or national level, must take account of distinctions between various types of aquaculture production (saltwater fish, freshwater fish, molluscs, crustaceans, seaweed and echinoderms), with measures properly geared to their market and to competition structures and issues,
- P. whereas the measures to promote the development of sustainable aquaculture must take into account, in some cases, the need to reduce to a minimum the stress levels caused by farm density or transport and to search for more humane slaughter techniques, and the well-being of fish in general,
- Q. whereas Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union recognises fish as sentient beings and provides that the Union and the Member States shall, in formulating and implementing their policies on fisheries, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of the animals,
- R. whereas aquaculture operators in many EU countries are burdened by excessive bureaucratic obstacles and administrative formalities, deriving from the existing legal framework, that limit their productivity and competitiveness, doing more than a little to discourage investors,
- S. whereas fish are the natural diet of many farmed fish species and most fish farms rely on diets which contain some fishmeal and fish oil,
- T. whereas, at the same time, many EU countries lack specific national or regional development plans that regulate installations in continental, coastal and marine areas and clearly identify the zones available for aquaculture plants, thereby preventing easily foreseeable conflicts of interest with environmental protection policies and other economic sectors, such as tourism, agriculture and coastal fishing,
- U. whereas a sustainable aquaculture policy can coexist with ‘Natura 2000’ areas and can even contribute positively to the management thereof in cases where the conservation objectives of the site so allow, and to the welfare of the populations concerned when it deals with traditional shellfishing activities or provides for aquaculture plants of an appropriate size for which there are no alternative locations, that comply with Community rules on environmental impact assessments and are compatible with the provisions on the protection of habitats,
- V. whereas EU products currently face fierce competition from imports from non-EU countries (above all, Turkey, Chile, Vietnam and China), where companies can operate with much lower overheads, as they are not subject to the same legal constraints and the same stringent environmental and plant health legislation, and can pay low wages (social dumping), thereby placing the EU aquaculture sector under further pressure, affecting food quality and endangering consumers’ health,
- W. whereas aquaculture activities have a lower environmental impact than other primary sectors, and aquaculture products are thus more sustainable; whereas a section of

European civil society is unaware of this fact, which may give rise to unfounded prejudices about these products,

- X. whereas the depredations of cormorants are threatening, in many areas, to put traditional, more natural fish ponds out of business,

GENERAL

1. Welcomes the Commission's initiative of submitting the aforementioned Communication COM(2009)0162, as an indication of greater attention being given to the sustainable aquaculture sector, and hopes that this will lead to a legislative review that will be better geared to the needs and the challenges facing the sector, with a view to consolidating this at global level;
2. Points out that, with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament has ceased to be a consultative body in the fisheries sector and has become a co-legislator in the aquaculture sector as well;
3. Considers that any legislative reform of the aquaculture sector should fit in, in a smooth and complementary manner, with the current process of reform of the Common Fisheries Policy;
4. Points out that Parliament has already in the past drawn attention to the need for more concise, consistent and transparent legislation on aquaculture;
5. Expresses the view that a strong sustainable aquaculture sector could act as a catalyst for the development of many remote, coastal and rural areas in the Member States and contribute to the development of local production, with significant benefits also for consumers in the form of high-quality, healthy and sustainably produced food products;
6. Considers that the competitiveness of Community aquaculture should be strengthened through strong, active, targeted and steady support for research and technological development, which is an essential prerequisite for the development of a sustainable, modern, efficient, economically viable and environment-friendly aquaculture sector; points out too that research networks, multidisciplinary research groups, technology transfer and coordination between the sector and scientists through technology platforms are essential to ensure a good return on investment in R&D;
7. Welcomes the creation of the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform, taking into account the need for the aquaculture sector to be supported by excellence in research and innovation in order to respond to the emerging challenges;
8. Considers that the success of the European sustainable aquaculture sector will be largely dependent on the establishment, nationally and locally, of a more business-friendly environment, and calls on the Member States, therefore, to speed up their work towards this without delay and to promote exchanges of experience and best practices at EU level;
9. Underlines that the reduction of red tape will encourage investment in the sector and considers it essential that the Member States, in close cooperation with local authorities,

implement administrative simplification procedures as soon as possible, introducing transparent and standardised concession procedures in respect of applications for the establishment of new aquaculture plants;

10. Considers that a sustainable and organic aquaculture sector should be in a position to provide consumers with high-quality food products ensuring healthy and balanced nutrition;
11. Considers that aquaculture systems which deplete capture fisheries or pollute coastal waters are to be considered unsustainable and that European aquaculture should give priority to herbivorous species and carnivorous species which can thrive on reduced consumption of fishmeals and oils;
12. Stresses that, in order to expand the aquaculture industry in Europe, the sector relies on continuous development to decrease the feed factor of wild-caught protein to product; points out that the stocks of wild fish suitable for feed production are limited and in many cases overfished and therefore aquaculture development should focus more on herbivorous species and piscivorous species which can further significantly decrease the feed factor;
13. Considers it urgent and essential to lay down and strengthen the rigorous, transparent quality and traceability criteria for EU aquaculture products, to improve fish feedstuffs, and to introduce and strengthen labelling criteria for high-quality aquaculture products and organic aquaculture production;
14. Considers that the priority aim of environmental quality certification for aquaculture products should be to promote the environment-friendly use of living aquatic resources in the context of a sustainable development that takes due account of environmental, economic and social factors, with due respect for the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries¹ and future FAO guidelines;
15. Calls on the Commission to introduce a European eco-labelling programme for fishery and aquaculture products that follows the Community guidelines on eco-labelling; emphasises that eco-labelling not only gives European aquaculture products a competitive advantage, but also brings transparency to a market in which the proliferation of private certifications can confuse consumers;
16. Calls on the Commission to take action to ensure that the stocking of aquaculture farms does not affect the natural status or viability of wild populations, marine ecosystems and biodiversity in general;
17. Views financial assistance compensating for damage caused by legally protected animals as an essential precondition for the development of a sustainable, modern and efficient aquaculture sector;
18. Takes the view that, while any proposed EU legislation should address general aspects such as environmental impact assessments, water use and protection, and product

¹ Adopted by the FAO on 31 October 1995.

traceability, a generic or undifferentiated approach must not be adopted in that legislation;

19. Stresses the need for a firmer commitment from the EU on investments in sustainable aquaculture, in the form of additional financing under the Community Fisheries Fund, giving preference to best environmental practice; points out, however, that future financing of aquaculture related activities should only be possible with the effective implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment¹ (EIA) Directive, to ensure that projects funded do not lead to degradation of the environment or of wild-fish or shellfish stocks;
20. Stresses that respect for biodiversity should be established as a basic principle of EU aquaculture policy, as regards both domestic waters and the external dimension of the aquaculture strategy, with support being given to the farming of fish only where the species involved are local or already well established; calls for scientific risk assessment for all non-native introductions and for measures to contain and monitor ecologically harmful species;
21. Reiterates the need to include traditional shellfishing activities along with the rest of the aquaculture sector in the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability and to guarantee them non-discriminatory access to European funding;
22. Considers it essential that all the appropriate steps be taken to ensure that any aquaculture product imported into the EU from a third country, either for consumption or for processing, complies in full with the same public health and food safety standards as the equivalent Community product, and that meticulous checks at the appropriate sites contribute effectively towards this, without creating new trade barriers, but in encouraging the exchange of best practices with developing countries;
23. Stresses that aquaculture should be considered as complementary to the catch sector, in particular as regards market supply and employability;

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative, administrative and financial framework

24. Calls on the Commission to bring forward swiftly a proposal for a regulation consolidating in a single text all the EU legislation governing the aquaculture sector and to promote coordination between the different Directorates-General that have responsibility in this field;
25. Calls on the Commission to set out in that regulation specific European certification criteria and general basic rules for the various product categories, with which every aquaculture establishment in the Community must comply, together with provisions for maximum harmonisation of environmental impact criteria at Community level in order to avoid any distortion of competition between Member States, but to delegate responsibility

¹ Directive 85/337/ECC, as amended by Directive 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC (the EIA Directive)

for the implementation phase and checks on the operation of the establishments to the competent authorities of the Member States, in full accordance with the principle of subsidiarity; e.g. parameters on environmental impact, use of water resources, feeding of farmed fish, molluscs and crustaceans in production units, product traceability and labelling, as well as fish health and welfare standards etc.;

26. Believes that the aquaculture sector should be duly supervised and should cover a wider range of marine activities, such as maritime transport, nautical tourism, offshore wind farms, fishing, etc.;
27. Calls on the Commission to strive to ensure that the Member States make a formal undertaking to document and apply their countries' existing environmental and tourism protection legislation and – in respect of those zones not subject to restrictions – to adopt the necessary development plans for the management of marine, coastal and inland water areas, so that sectoral plans for aquaculture can be set up, clearly identifying the areas available for the establishment of plants in the sector;
28. Calls on the Member States to work towards a 'maritime development plan' and the integrated management of coastal areas, as provided for under the EU's new maritime policy and in line with environmental impact assessments, which covers all the different product categories in the sector, such as shellfishing, sub-coastal aquaculture, offshore and freshwater aquaculture, and to undertake to reduce existing bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining the requisite permits and concessions to start a sustainable aquaculture activity, possibly by setting up 'one-stop shops' that centralise the administrative formalities incumbent on operators in a single location; calls too on the Member States to draw up long-term strategic plans to foster the sustainable development of this activity and on the Commission to bring forward proposals for all measures required to promote competitiveness in the sector, taking into account the specificities of each Member State;
29. Hopes that the future European Fisheries Fund in support of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy will provide for specific budget lines for sustainable aquaculture development and support for investment in that sector, following best environmental practice, and to promote economic activity and employment with a particular focus on technologically innovative plants with a lesser environmental impact (e.g. water purification systems for eliminating residues and pollutants), farms that promote fish health and welfare and sustainable forms of aquaculture; stresses that these budget lines should provide for additional funding from the European Fisheries Fund and should not be financed through an overall cut in spending in other sectors, in particular fisheries;
30. Hopes that this Fund will take into due account the need to provide financial support for enterprises in the sector, particularly for SMEs and family-run enterprises, based on their contribution to the social and economic development of the coastal area and with the emphasis on remote and border areas;
31. Supports the Member States in simplifying the licensing procedures that would encourage access to new sites and facilitate long-term access to existing sites, especially those sites where SMEs and family-run enterprises operate;
32. Emphasises too the need to ensure increased financial contributions for scientific research,

innovation and technology transfers in the field of sustainable, organic, offshore and freshwater aquaculture, and for enterprises which are to convert part or all of conventional production to organic production, by means of sectoral policies covering all key aspects, from the supply chain to the optimisation and promotion of products on the market, with better management of those aspects in the thematic axes set out under the Structural Funds and in Community programmes;

33. Urges the Commission to equip the aquaculture sector with a real economic crisis instrument and to devise support systems to deal with biological natural disasters (like toxic algal blooms), man-made disasters (like the Erika or the Prestige) or extreme weather events (cyclones, floods, etc.);
34. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the experimental farming of native species, technologies for the production of healthy fish and efforts to combat diseases occurring in aquaculture, in the interests of diversifying Community aquaculture production, so that it can offer high-quality and high added-value products, by encouraging research and exchanges of best practices on those species and on the production methods concerned, in order to enable aquaculture products better to compete with other innovative food products;
35. Stresses the need to take measures to ensure stocks to replenish species that are becoming rarer in rivers, in particular traditionally migratory species with a significant economic impact on local populations (sturgeon, shad, salmon, etc.) and certain species at sea, and draws the attention of the Commission and the Member States to the need to guarantee the necessary funding for the implementation of such initiatives;
36. Calls on the Commission to take into account the trend towards the development of offshore aquaculture facilities as a potential solution to the problem of the availability of space on European coasts, and to take account of the difficult environmental and climate conditions in which this type of aquaculture is carried out;
37. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee appropriate vocational training in the field of aquaculture, boost the competitiveness of the sector and encourage the possible retraining of members of the professional fishing industry in alternative methods of managing aquatic environments, thus also helping to create secure jobs for young people in rural and coastal areas and in the outermost regions, and especially in regions that depend to a great extent on fisheries and aquaculture activities;
38. Calls on the Member States to consider creating specialist organisations for the promotion of aquaculture products; calls also on the Commission to extend the rules on the common market organisations to the sustainable aquaculture sector and to support and provide incentives for promotional campaigns at EU level and on external markets;

Quality and consumer protection policy

39. Takes the view that sustainable aquaculture development cannot take precedence over a stringent quality policy, environment-friendly production methods respectful of animal welfare – as regards the transport of aquaculture stock, methods of slaughter and the sale of live fish – rigorous health standards and a high level of consumer protection;

40. Calls on the Commission, therefore, to develop a specific EU quality label for aquaculture products, along with a specific organic aquaculture label, establishing strict rules in accordance with EU principles of high-quality organic production, so as to assure the consumer of the reliability of the system for the production, control and full traceability of aquaculture products; encourages the Commission to consider using already existing labelling structures for high-quality organic aquaculture production;
41. Takes the view that the responsible production of ingredients to feed fish, including marine ingredients, is a prerequisite for the sustainability of aquaculture;
42. Calls on the Commission to organise and promote, in close cooperation with the Member States, institutional information campaigns to promote aquaculture products, including organic aquaculture products;
43. Reiterates the views it has already expressed in its resolution on the adoption of a European Cormorant Management Plan, and points out that reducing the prejudice caused by cormorants and other birds of prey to aquaculture firms is a major factor in production costs and thus in their survival and competitiveness; draws attention to the need to assess losses caused by cormorants and other birds of prey in the aquaculture sector and to draw up plans for corrective action in the sector;
44. Calls on the Commission to take the steps called for in Parliament's resolution of 4 December 2008¹, particularly with regard to the implementation of a staged cormorant population management plan, coordinated at European level, and scientific data gathering on the size of cormorant populations; calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals for comprehensive legislation in this field;
45. Calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States and having taken account of the various geographical and climatological conditions, the production techniques used and the particular nature of the species farmed, to propose specific sustainable criteria in relation to the well-being of farmed fish, such as maximum levels of farming density, the quantity of vegetable and animal proteins that can be used in feedstuffs on the different types of fish farms, and which take into account the specific factors relating to the farming of individual species, the nutritional requirements of the fish species farmed, the phases in their life cycle and the environmental conditions, and to promote transportation and slaughter practices which limit sources of stress and the changing of water in fish ponds in such a way as to guarantee the well-being of the fish being farmed there; understands that the long-term goal must be to substitute animal proteins with vegetable proteins for all species where it is possible, considering their nutritional needs, and that strategic research into replacements for the essential ingredients should be of highest priority, considering that research into the essential nutrients and how to produce them from alternative sources such as microalgae and yeast would reduce the need for fish meal in the longer term;
46. Calls on the Commission to extend the scope of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on

¹ European Parliament resolution of 4 December 2008 on the adoption of a European Cormorant Management Plan to minimise the increasing impact of cormorants on fish stocks, fishing and aquaculture, P6_TA(2008)0583, report by Heinz Kindermann (2008/2177(INI)).

the protection of animals during transport¹ so as to limit the transport of fish over long distances, thus promoting locally based hatchery operations and encouraging slaughter close to the fish farm;

47. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the sourcing of raw materials used for fish feed follows an environmentally acceptable practice and does not have negative impacts on the ecosystems from which these ingredients are harvested;
48. Calls on the Commission to ensure that pre-slaughter procedures classed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as harmful to the wellbeing of the fish are avoided; methods of slaughter, such as asphyxiation in ice slurry, in which, according to the EFSA, fish retain consciousness for a long time before death, should be prohibited;
49. Urges the Commission to issue specific technical guidelines on the certification of sustainable fish feed;

External relations

50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strive to ensure that Community legislation is applied rigorously throughout the whole chain of aquaculture products, including feedstuffs and raw materials for feedstuffs, imported from third countries;
51. Calls on the Commission to investigate at first hand production methods on fish farms outside the European Union and report on any health hazards;
52. Emphasises the need to ensure that aquatic food products that are manufactured in or imported into the EU comply with high environmental protection and consumer health and safety standards;
53. Calls on the Commission to strive to ensure that the principle of mutual recognition and free movement of goods is applied to curative and preventive pharmaceuticals used in aquaculture, to promote reciprocal advanced know-how agreements with third countries and to promote the introduction of best practices by other countries and international bodies;
54. Reiterates the importance of conducting systematic checks at places giving access to the internal market and key import hubs in order to provide consumers with a watertight guarantee that the aquaculture products imported from third countries are systematically subjected to stringent quality control and are therefore fully compliant with EU rules in the field of hygiene and public health;
55. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to champion those principles both at the WTO and in all the relevant institutional fora;
56. Calls on the Commission to sponsor, as part of the EU's policy on cooperation with developing countries, support and training measures designed to help promote sustainable aquaculture and steer the awareness of aquaculturists in those countries towards a policy

¹ OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

on quality and higher production standards, particularly as regards the environment, hygiene and social standards in the industry;

57. Calls on the Commission to submit a report on environmental and social standards in the aquaculture industry outside the EU and to explore ways of improving the provision of information to consumers;
58. Calls on the Commission to launch impact assessment studies concerning the possible effects that Community trade agreements may have on the aquaculture sector;
59. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This report seeks to make a significant contribution to the development of a new EU strategy in the field of aquaculture designed to promote its sustainable development in the medium and long term. It also provides a set of operational guidelines and concrete demands addressed to the Council and the European Commission, which it calls on to present an appropriate legislative proposal in the near future.

The European aquaculture industry numbers more than 16 500 firms, with a total annual turnover of more than EUR 3.5 billion, generating some 64 000 direct and indirect jobs¹. European aquaculture production doubled to 1.3 million tonnes between 1981 and 2001, but more or less stagnated (+0.5%) until 2008, whereas world production grew very rapidly (+7.6% a year) over the same period². In a global context of high demand for aquaculture products, Europe contributes just 2% of world aquaculture production³, while its internal consumption amounts to more than five million tonnes a year; it consequently has to import two-thirds of the products it needs from non-EU countries; it consequently has to import two-thirds of the products it needs from non-EU countries.

There is no EU legislation on the aquaculture sector at present, and it continues to be covered by a plethora of EU legislation and national rules which can vary significantly between states, creating a legal framework lacking in transparency and discriminatory situations and market distortions that do little to encourage investment in the sector. The Commission adopted an initial communication in 2002⁴, which was the subject of a European Parliament legislative resolution of January 2003⁵, has failed to increase the transparency of the regulatory framework. On the contrary, the Commission and Council have continued to adopt, often via the comitology procedure⁶, detailed rules applicable to aquaculture (organic and otherwise), in respect of which Parliament has had no opportunity whatsoever to voice a direct opinion. The recent Commission communication of April 2009 which forms the subject of this report therefore provides the chance to assess the appropriateness of introducing a specific EU framework for the aquaculture sector, with the ultimate objective remaining the structured development of a sustainable European aquaculture industry which respects environmental balances, increases the economic worth of aquaculture operators and their local communities and offers consumers more guarantees. It will also be appropriate to assess the relevant synergies - at both legislative and operational level - between the proposals formulated by the aquaculture industry and the framing of the new CFP which is currently being developed for the period post-2012.

¹ Framian (2009) 'Definition of data collection needs for aquaculture'.

² European Commission 'Study on the economic performance and the competitiveness of aquaculture in the European Union', December 2008', December 2008.

³ FAO (2009) Fishstat Plus Database, 'Aquaculture Production 1950-2007'.

⁴ 'A strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture' COM(2002)511 fin.

⁵ Hugues Martin report (A5-0448/2002, 2002/2058(INI)), adopted in plenary on 16.01.2003.

⁶ e.g. Regulation (EC) 710/2009, published in the OJ of 5 August 2009 and amending Regulation 834/2007.

2.3.2010

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

for the Committee on Fisheries

on a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture
(2009/2107(INI))

Rapporteur: Kartika Tamara Liotard

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas all forms of aquaculture must be sustainable and socially just and, consequently, no harm must be done to ecosystems through an increase in the concentrations of natural substances and in the concentrations of substances produced by humans, such as non-degradable chemicals and carbon dioxide, and through physical disturbance,
- B. whereas environmentally sustainable forms of aquaculture could make a positive contribution to environmental protection as well as providing an alternative way of meeting much of the demand for fisheries products,
- C. whereas aquaculture and the associated production facilities must not lead to people being systematically deprived of what they need to meet their basic needs with regard to food, water and housing,
- D. whereas fish can suffer pain and stress and many forms of aquaculture do not meet the EU's requirements for animal welfare, and whereas proper consideration and implementation of animal welfare standards can result in significant benefits, such as improved product quality and less environmental damage,
- E. whereas the EU is a net importer of aquaculture products; whereas, furthermore, a reliable certification system for aquaculture products is needed,
- F. whereas more and more new animal breeds and plant varieties are being produced for

consumption by means of aquaculture,

- G. whereas the Commission recently published a Communication on 'A Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture'¹,
1. Draws the Commission's attention to the fact that many forms of aquaculture may have negative impacts on both animal welfare and human health, such as destruction of habitats, use of chemicals to combat disease, depletion and salinisation of drinking water and agricultural land, nutrient contamination, especially in lakes and in closed and semi-closed sea areas, such as the Baltic Sea, and disturbance of biodiversity through the escape of farmed fish, and calls on the Commission to introduce legislation to eliminate these negative effects;
 2. Calls on the Commission to take greater account of the welfare of fish (having regard to their putative ability to think and feel) in its sustainable aquaculture strategy and, further, to carry out research into welfare indicators, stunning and slaughtering methods and transport mechanisms for fish;
 3. Calls on the Commission to introduce a sustainable certification system for aquaculture products that goes further than Regulation (EC) No 1251/2008 and, in addition to animal health, also provides certification in respect of environmental and social effects, food safety, animal welfare and economic and financial aspects, and draws the Commission's attention to the fact that, within the FAO framework, positive progress has already been made towards such a certification system;
 4. Observes that there are substantial regulatory disparities concerning aquaculture, which may prompt undertakings to relocate production to those places where the least stringent provisions apply, and urges the Commission to bar from the European market products which fail to meet European production standards;
 5. Draws the Commission's attention to the fact that new production methods used in aquaculture and/or new animal breeds and plant varieties which have been brought onto the market since 15 May 1997 may come under the Novel Food Regulation and, consequently, require market authorisation.
 6. Calls on the Commission to investigate at first hand production methods on fish farms outside the European Union and report on any health hazards;
 7. Calls on the Commission to insist that aquaculture facilities outside the EU undergo stringent inspection and monitoring in order to ensure that imports comply with EU standards and that European producers face fair competition;
 8. Emphasises the need to ensure that aquatic food products that are manufactured in or imported into the EU comply with high environmental protection and consumer health and safety standards;

¹ COM(2009) 162 final, Building a sustainable future for aquaculture: A new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture.

9. Calls on the Commission to draw up, as a matter of urgency, specific criteria and guidelines for the aquaculture sector dealing with the interpretation and implementation of EU directives on environmental impact assessments; stresses that this effort should not undermine the ability of national governments and local authorities to set their own criteria and guidelines, taking site-specific conditions into account;
10. Stresses that respect for biodiversity should be established as a basic principle of EU aquaculture policy, as regards both domestic waters and the external dimension of the aquaculture strategy, with support being given to the farming of fish only where the species involved are local or already well established; calls for scientific risk assessment for all non-native introductions and for measures to contain and monitor ecologically harmful species;
11. Calls on the Commission to issue guidance on the resolution of conflicts arising out of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive regarding aquaculture activities; stresses, however, that this guidance should not jeopardise the overall objective of good water status, as set out in the Water Framework Directive¹;
12. Calls on the Commission to promote the development of Maritime Spatial Planning in the context of the new EU Integrated Maritime Policy² as a way of coordinating Community action in related fields, including aquaculture;
13. Urges the Commission to promote research and development relating to aquaculture, placing the emphasis on integrated and closed water-recirculation systems.

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

² Commission Communication COM(2007) 575 final - 'An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union'.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	23.2.2010
Result of final vote	+: 42 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	János Áder, Elena Oana Antonescu, Paolo Bartolozzi, Sandrine Bélier, Sergio Berlato, Milan Cabrnoch, Nessa Childers, Bas Eickhout, Edite Estrela, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Satu Hassi, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Dan Jørgensen, Karin Kadenbach, Christa Kläß, Jo Leinen, Peter Liese, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Gilles Pargneaux, Antonia Parvanova, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Mario Pirillo, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Oreste Rossi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Carl Schlyter, Horst Schnellhardt, Richard Seeber, Theodoros Skylakakis, Bogusław Sonik, Catherine Soullie, Salvatore Tatarella, Anja Weisgerber, Sabine Wils, Marina Yannakoudakis
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jutta Haug, Anna Záborská, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Veronica Lope Fontagné

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	4.5.2010
Result of final vote	+: 21 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Josefa Andrés Barea, Alain Cadec, João Ferreira, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Marek Józef Gróbarczyk, Carl Haglund, Isabella Lövin, Guido Milana, Britta Reimers, Crescenzo Rivellini, Ulrike Rodust, Struan Stevenson, Catherine Trautmann, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jean-Paul Bisset, Ole Christensen, Gabriel Mato Adrover, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Ioannis A. Tsoukalas
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Carlos Coelho, Aldo Patriciello, Potito Salatto