
TWO FRENCH MPS WANT THEIR PARLIAMENT TO DISCUSS EUROPE'S OVERFISHING PROBLEM

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Two French MPs presented a report to the French parliamentary committee on European affairs on 17 July. The report recommended 27 measures to prevent the collapse of Europe's fish resources. EURACTIV's partner le Journal de l'environnement reports.

Thirty years after the first warnings, two French MPs – Jean-Pierre Pont of Emmanuel Macron's La République en Marche (LREM) and Didier Quentin of the right-wing Les Républicains (LR) – are sounding the alarm and calling to put a stop to overfishing in the European Union as soon as possible.

All EU member states adopted this objective in 2013 as part of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). This objective needs to be reached by 2020 at the very latest.

Lifting the veil on quotas

In their report About sustainable fishing for the European Union, the MPs called on the European Commission and the Council to establish fishing quotas more transparently.

As a result of closed-door negotiations, two-thirds of the total allowable catches (TACs) were set above scientific advice between 2001 and 2018, according to the New Economics Foundation.

The two MPs asked the institutions in Brussels to justify TACs that exceeded scientific advice and to programme TACs on a multiannual basis.

In April 2019, the environmental NGO ClientEarth lodged a complaint before the European Ombudsman about the Council's lack of transparency over fishing quotas.

Following the NGOs request, the EU Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly issued an inquiry into the lack of transparency of national ministers' annual decisions on fishing quotas.

The famous all-night meetings of ministers in Brussels are completely behind closed doors and yet make important decisions for the sustainability of fishing stocks and of jobs in fishing communities around Europe, she said.

A fund that needs to be better targeted

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) also encourages overfishing by subsidising fleet renewal, according to several NGOs interested in marine conservation.

With 11 billion for the 2014-2020 period, including 1 billion intended for France, it provides too little incentive for technical innovations that promote sustainability, concluded MPs Pont and Quentin.

Only 20.6% of the funds granted to France were used for sustainable fishing in May 2019, while the report recommends using at least 30% of these funds for this purpose.

Fishing for trouble: How Europe is losing money by overfishing

Replenishing Europe's fishing stocks could create thousands of jobs and boost the EU's GDP by 1 billion per year, a new study says, but environmental activists warn that governments lack the political will to implement EU guidelines on sustainable fishing.

Mediterranean Emergency Plan

The report also proposes an emergency plan for the Mediterranean, where overfishing is a record and affects 90% of fish stocks, compared to 60% in the Atlantic.

On the menu: funds dedicated to regional fisheries research (assessments in France only concern 200 stocks). This is particularly important for the European hake as a collapse in stocks of the young hake has been observed since the early 1990s.

Finally, the report calls for the creation of a European label for sustainable fishing and for leisure fishing to be taken into account in management policies.

Kaynak/Source: