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News



European Parliament

PECH Committee holds exchange of views on Commission's proposal for a new European Maritime Fisheries Fund

29 August 2018

In the exchange of views, the MEPs regretted the proposed 5% cut to the budget of the fund, with the majority calling for simplifying the application of the fund. The rapporteur for the dossier, Gabriel Mato MEP, called for a proper budgetary framework to deal with emerging challenges in the fishing sector, and warned that reducing the finance available for fishing would have adverse effects on the sector.

He praised the Commission's efforts to simplify the fund, and advocated that ongoing support should be afforded to the processing industry and for further commercialisation of fisheries products and artisanal fishing. The MEP concluded by stating the current proposals, as they stand, would be perhaps too demanding on operators and applicants to the fund in the member states.

ENVI – Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

30 August 2018

On August 30, the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety held a consideration of a draft report on Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, prepared by Frédérique Ries (ALDE, BE).

On 28 May, the Commission adopted a proposal for a new Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, which is part of the wider approach announced in the Plastics Strategy and of the Circular Economy Action Plan. The proposal includes new EU-wide rules targeting the ten single-use plastic products most often found on Europe's beaches and seas, as

well as lost and abandoned fishing gear. These items constitute 70% of all marine litter items.

The Rapporteur tabled 45 amendments on strengthening the timeline, adding certain products, such as cigarette filters and ultra-thin plastic bags as well as introduces certain targets, although no amendments related to lost and abandoned fishing gear.

EP motion for resolution – Classifying the American lobster as an invasive species

29 August 2018

The MfR identifies the spread of the American lobster to EU shores (particularly in Sweden and the UK) and stipulates American lobsters are damaging EU ecosystems through crossbreeding and increasing competition for habitats with native species, registers its 'alarm' at the impact that CETA could have on imports of American lobsters, and calls upon the Commission to classify American Lobsters as an invasive species. The MfR was not adopted by the plenary.

Parliamentary Question on infringement procedures against Portugal for IUU fishing

28 August 2018

PQ (awaiting answer) authored by a NGL/GUE MEP identifies that press reports suggest incidences of IUU in Portugal, and as such the Commission has suspended EMFF funding to Portugal because of it. The PQ asks for specifics – which ship owners, fishing periods and zones are involved, how proceedings would develop and suggesting the creation of fisheries inspectors with the powers to conduct criminal investigations.



European Commission

Thailand – Commission retains Thailand's 'yellow card' status

18 September 2018

Press reports have suggested that after assessment from the Commission, Thailand will retain its 'yellow card' status following insufficient progress towards stemming IUU. The yellow card was given to the country in 2015 for shortcomings in fisheries monitoring, control and sanctioning systems in relation to IUU.

Senior Thai officials have stated that since 2015, significant work has been undertaken to address problems in its fishing sector, with enforcement operations

undertaken to cease IUU activity. Moreover, the Deputy Prime Minister has reported that just over 50% of Thailand's trawler fleet has undergone registration in order to comply with international laws.

India – Commission audit results to be discussed in standing committees

21 September 2018

The Commission is scheduled to discuss the outcome of its audit visit to India, conducted in the first half of 2018. The audit evaluated the Indian official control of residues and contaminants in live and animal products including controls on veterinary products. Discussions will take place in the Commission Toxicological and Controls and Imports Conditions standing committees, with the following agenda:

1. The outcome of the safeguard cell related to the shortcomings identified during an audit in India (from 16 to 27 April 2018) on the evaluation of the control of residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products including controls on veterinary medicinal products.
2. Residues monitoring to put in place some testing on a broader range of pharmacologically active substances – with the emphasis on antimicrobial substances, for aquaculture products from India.

The Commission's results have not yet been released.

DG SANTE – Health and food safety audits (Fisheries products) – Japan

30 August 2018

DG SANTE published a report of its March 2018 audit with the scope of evaluating the control systems in place governing the production of fisheries products intended for export to the EU. The report concluded that the Japanese official control system is based on adequate procedures underpinned by legislation which broadly aligns with that of the EU, except for a requirement for a HACCP in freezer vessels. The official control system is implemented satisfactorily in general across the production chain.

The report however suggests that there is incomplete oversight over staff and approved control bodies, and a 'preference for giving advice rather than recourse to enforcement measures, a lack of deadlines for corrective action and incomplete alignment of HACCP legislation'.

DG ENV – Plastics: refuse recycling and marine litter report published

19 September 2018

This report, and its annexes, set out the methodology used to assess the impacts of introducing a range of measures tackling single use plastics (SUP) The outputs of this study were used to underpin the impact assessment carried out by the Commission for the proposal for a 'Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment'.

The report firstly details the approach taken to produce the results. The rationale for selecting the top ten priority SUP items for inclusion in scope of the Directive is then summarised. The baseline policies set to influence the consumption and management of SUPs are outlined, along with the approach to defining the range of measures that would feasibly tackle each of the top ten items. The detail of the assessment model to produce the quantitative results is then described. Finally, the definition of the main options modelled is given, followed by a presentation of the outcomes of the assessment and associated narrative.

Vella visits Faroes for high-level event on sustainable ocean governance


28 August 2018

The objective of this annual high-level event is for ministers from northern Atlantic countries to address issues of concern in an informal setting. As part of this year's topic, "sustainable ocean governance", Commissioner Vella presented the European Union's ocean agenda, and in particular the actions undertaken by the EU under the 2016 International ocean governance agenda. Its objective is to reduce pressures on the oceans and to promote sustainable blue economy. The Commissioner also called on all participants to work together to improve international ocean governance. His full remarks are available [here](#)



Dates for
the diary



- 1 & 10 October: **ENVI Committee meets in Brussels**
 - 3 October 2018: [Seafood Regulation Expert Group](#)
 - 8-9 October 2018: **PECH Commitee meets in Brussels**
 - 17-18 October 2018: **Seafish Seafood Summit 2018**
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- House of Commons Library publishes note on EU Exit negotiations and fisheries policy

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