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Speaking notes

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

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Dear Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the long-term anchovy plan, let me first of all thank the Rapporteur, Ms Bilbao, and all the Members of the Fisheries Committee, for their work on this proposal. I would like to say, there was indeed a delay of the adoption of this proposal. We have done everything to de-block the situation.

The anchovy stock in the Bay of Biscay was threatened by collapse and the fishery was therefore closed in 2005. It was only 5 years later that it was re-opened in January 2010. Last July scientists confirmed that the stock was safely above precautionary limits. This allowed me to propose a TAC of 15 600 tonnes, which is in force now. The TAC follows the harvest rules of the plan and I am happy to see that this proposal is already helping us to properly manage this stock.

Clearly, the long closure caused serious financial damage to those depending on this fishery. We absolutely need to prevent that this happens again. The only way to do that is to exploit the stock consistent with maximum sustainable yield and keep a low risk of fishery closure. Our proposal shows that this can be done while at the same time providing stability for the industry.

If we want to avoid closure then we need to keep the exploitation rate at 30%.

I would like to thank the Fisheries Committee for its support, both in substance and in relation to delegation of powers to the Commission. I can support these amendments. Also, I can support those related to the alignment of the proposal with the new control regulation in force since January 2010.

There is only one exception. It relates to reducing the delay for notifying entry into port from 4 to one hour. This amendment changes the 4 hours rule in the new Control regulation. I do not favour this change to the control regulation so soon after its entry into force. Especially since the Control regulation itself allows Coastal Member States to apply specific exemptions when justified.

Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will now turn to the second report, the multi-annual plan for horse mackerel. Let me say that Mr. Gallagher, as Rapporteur, and all the Members of the Fisheries Committee have done excellent work on this proposal and I would like to give you my sincere thanks for all your hard work and your constructive approach.

Western horse mackerel is by far the most important of the three horse mackerel stocks in EU waters. Presently the stock is stable at a good level, translating into an almost unchanged TAC for 2011.

The annual TAC decision on this stock based on recent scientific advice does not correspond to our objective of having a binding and predictable long-term management. Therefore this plan, like other long term plans, is dear to me, because I want us to move away from the annual haggling in Council on much can be fished. We owe it to the industry to give them more planning and stability by agreeing on long term plans.

Your general support, both in substance and on delegation of powers, show that you have the same goal. I can support your amendments, and also those related to the alignment of the proposal with the new control regulation in force since January 2010. Other than this, the plan itself should not fix TAC areas, leaving the possibility to adapt these in the annual TAC decisions following relevant scientific advice.

However, there is one amendment that does not go in the right direction, namely your acceptance of the Council Presidency's compromise of + or – 5 000 tons. This figure is simply not science based. Having discretion to move the TAC up and down

the "right" levels in a long-term management strategy does not seem to me a robust approach.

I will turn now to the third report on the Baltic Technical Measures. I take this opportunity to thank the Rapporteur, Mr. Grobarczyk for his very good work on the report and again here I can only thank the Fisheries Committee for their full support on this proposal.

With this proposal we ensure the legal continuity on our policy on high-grading, introduced in the Baltic Sea last year and fishing restrictions for some species.

Mr President,

I will now focus on the last report in debate today, the use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture.

I would like to thank the Rapporteur, Mr Ferreira for his work on this file. I appreciate the strong support of the Fisheries Committee on the Commission proposal.

As you know, the Commission has committed to promote a sustainable development of aquaculture in the EU through the new Aquaculture Strategy. This implies a high level of environmental protection but also the establishment of the conditions to facilitate aquaculture operations. The present modification of the Regulation on the introduction of alien species in aquaculture closed facilities will certainly facilitate aquaculture activities, by eliminating unnecessary administrative burden, while ensuring, at the same time, an adequate protection of the aquatic habitats. I very much welcome the idea to enhance our research efforts especially in the area of aquaculture.

I am very pleased that the discussions at the Fisheries Committee have resulted in a better definition of "closed aquaculture facility".

I would like to stress that the initial proposal was adopted by the Commission one month before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The Fisheries Committee proposed amendments aimed to bring the basic Regulation in line with the new comitology provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. We considered opportune to carry out this alignment proposed by the European Parliament. On the other hand, it was necessary to modify formally our proposal to introduce such substantial amendments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I would once again like to thank all Rapporteurs and the Fisheries Committee for their reports and work on these relevant issues.

Thank you.