



European Parliament Supports Strengthening the EU Finning Ban

16.12.10: The European Parliament today endorsed a resolution on shark finning that calls on the Commission to deliver a proposal to prohibit the removal of shark fins on-board vessels.

Four Members of the European Parliament (MEPs): Jean-Paul Basset, Chris Davies, Sirpa Pietikäinen, and Daciana Octavia Sârbu, from the ALDE, EPP-DE, Greens-EFA and S&D groups launched Written Declaration 71/2010 on shark finning on 20 September. By 16 December, over 400 of the 736 MEPs had added their names, achieving a majority. The Written Declaration is now adopted by the Plenary of the European Parliament. Endorsed as a Resolution of the Parliament, it will be forwarded to the European Commission, who last month launched a public consultation on options for amending the regulation, including a ban on at-sea fin removal.

“The removal of fins on board vessels and discarding the carcass is a wasteful and unacceptable way to fish. Europe is home to some of the world’s largest fishing fleets and poor European shark policies with lack of enforcement pose threats to sharks not only in European waters but in other parts of the world. The shark finning ban needs to be enforced effectively and we welcome this support from MEPs from across all European member states and political groups”, stated Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP, Finland, from the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats).

“I would like to thank EU citizens for encouraging us to take action. It sends a powerful message to EU decision makers that these valuable yet vulnerable species must be protected”, added Jean-Paul Basset MEP, France, from the group of the Greens/European Free Alliance.

“The current exploitation of the world’s oceans is unsustainable and we need to act now to preserve marine biodiversity. Sharks are crucial to the natural balance of marine ecosystem, and this Resolution is a positive step towards their much needed protection”, explained Daciana Sarbu MEP, Romania from the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

“The EU Commission now needs to propose legislation as soon as possible in 2011 with the one truly reliable option for preventing finning - a complete prohibition of the removal of shark fins at sea”, stated Chris Davies MEP, UK, from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group.

Sharks’ tendency to grow slowly, mature late and/or produce a small number of young makes them exceptionally vulnerable to overfishing. Roughly one-third of European species are considered threatened.

The Shark Alliance is a coalition of more than 100 conservation, scientific and recreational organisations dedicated to restoring and conserving shark populations by improving shark conservation policies. The Shark Alliance was pleased to support MEPs in this initiative.