Aquaculture: protection of the aquatic environment from the risks associated with the use of alien and locally absent species

2006/0056(CNS) - 11/06/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to protect the aquatic environment against the risks associated with the use in aquaculture of non-indigenous species and to contribute to the sustainable development of this sector in Europe.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 of 11 June 2007 concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture.

CONTENT: The regulation establishes a Community framework and sets up an authorisation system at national level for the introduction or translocation of aquatic organisms for use in aquaculture, with a view to optimising benefits associated with these practices in the EU, whilst avoiding alterations to ecosystems, preventing negative biological interaction with indigenous populations and restricting the spread of non-target species and detrimental impacts on natural habitats.

The main provisions of the Regulation are as follows:

- Member States shall ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to avoid adverse effects to biodiversity, and especially to species, habitats and ecosystem functions which may be expected to arise from the introduction or translocation of aquatic organisms and non-target species in aquaculture and from the spreading of these species into the wild. This Regulation shall not apply to the keeping of ornamental aquatic animals or plants in pet-shops, garden centres, contained garden ponds or aquaria.

- Aquaculture operators intending to undertake the introduction of an alien species or the translocation of a locally absent species shall apply for a permit from the competent authority of the receiving Member State. Applications may be submitted for multiple movements to take place over a period of not longer than seven years. The applicant shall be informed in writing within a reasonable time of the decision to issue or refuse a permit, and, in any case, not later than six months from the date of application. At any point in time, the Competent Authority can withdraw the permit, temporarily or permanently, if unforeseen events with negative effects on the environment or on native populations occur.

- Member States shall keep a register of introductions and translocations containing a historical record of all applications made and the associated documentation gathered before the issue of a permit and during the monitoring period.

The new measures are in line with the United Nations Convention on biological diversity, which identifies some invasive alien species as one of the causes of loss of local species and harm to marine and coastal biodiversity.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 18/06/2007. The Regulation will apply six months after the Commission's Regulation on implementing rules enters into force, but not later than 1 January 2009.