

# **Fisheries sector: temporary specific action aiming to promote the restructuring of the EU fishing fleets affected by the economic crisis**

2008/0144(CNS) - 08/07/2008 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE:** to set up a temporary specific action aiming to promote the restructuring of the European Union fishing fleets affected by the economic crisis, in particular the increase in fuel prices.

**LEGISLATIVE ACT:** Council Regulation.

**BACKGROUND:** the EU fisheries sector has long suffered from a vicious circle of poor economic profitability and over-exploitation of stocks due to a significant overcapacity. Several steps have been taken since the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to counter this vicious circle, but overcapacity and excessive fishing effort still jeopardise the economic viability of the sector.

In the context of the recent economic situation, following in particular the drastic increase in fuel prices, there is an impending need to take additional measures aiming for a more rapid adaptation of the Community fishing fleet to the current situation, addressing the need to ensure sustainable social and economic conditions for the sector concerned.

Such action should be equally available for all Member States and needs to be addressed and coordinated at Community level to avoid distorting competition between Member States or fleets.

**CONTENT:** the proposed Regulation establishes a specific action of the Community designed to provide for exceptional and temporary support for the persons and enterprises active in the fisheries sector affected by the economic crisis induced by the increase of oil prices in 2008, as a special regime under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF).

The measures focus primarily on reducing overcapacity and ensuring that vessels can operate more efficiently and at higher productivity.

Since this emergency situation requires coordinated solutions at EU level, the package relies basically on an enhanced use of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). It consists mainly of measures based on temporary derogations from rules under the EFF, to support a faster adaptation of the Community fleet to the present situation and to provide temporary relief in order to cushion economic and social consequences in the transitional phase.

In concrete terms, the Commission is proposing to set up an ad hoc special, temporary regime which will derogate from some provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund for a period up to 31 December 2010.