Outermost regions: management of fishing fleets

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Pedro **GUERREIRO** (GUE/NGL, PT) and amended the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 639/2004 on the management of fishing fleets registered in the Community outermost regions.

The main amendments adopted – under the consultation procedure – are as follows:

- given there are fleets in the outermost regions consisting mainly of ageing vessels (dating back over 30 years in some regions), MEPs consider it essential to ensure Community support for those fleets' renewal and modernisation, especially for the small-scale fleets, in order to improve the conditions for conservation of fish stocks and fishermen's working and safety conditions; the specific measures under this regulation should allow for the special needs of the fisheries sector in those regions;

- MEPs intend to provide a more realistic time horizon with a view to achieving the goals laid down in the Commission proposal. In view of limited shipyard capacity, the extension up to 31 December 2009 as initially proposed does not appear sufficient. A three-year extension (31 December 2008 - 31 December 2011) would seem more appropriate;

- derogations should respect the specific reference limits for fishing capacity defined in the regulation itself;

- by way of derogation, public aid to modernise the fleet in terms of tonnage and/or power may be allocated, within the limits of the specific reference levels provided for in the Regulation;

- by way of derogation, public aid for the renewal of fishing vessels may be granted until 31 December 2009;

- the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the implementation of this Regulation up to the expiry of the derogations provided for therein. As regards the measures referred to in Article 2 (fleet renewal and modernisation), the Commission shall propose such adjustments as might be required in the light both of the changing socioeconomic needs of the regions concerned and of the status of their fish stocks.