Common fisheries policy : improving scientific and technical advice for its management

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PURPOSE : to improve scientific advice for fisheries management. CONTENT : the Community must base the common fisheries policy on improved and timely scientific advice, thereby affording a firmer grounding in science than has been the case in the past. This will place more demands on the scientists and the existing scientific institutions than they can meet now and urgent improvements to the science base and its organisation are needed. The Commission has two main targets for improvements. 1) regional scientific organisations should maintain and strengthen their roles as forums for international science, methodological development, organisation of surveys and long-term, strategic advice on the scale of one or more years. To this end, the Community should better coordinate the contributions of Member States to regional scientific organisations. 2) the Community requires its own scientific advisory capacity which can provide operational advice for fisheries management within a short time-frame, to complement existing resources at the national level. The Commission proposes a short-term solution to improve the provision of advice, and outlines options for new institutional arrangements for a more solid and permanent framework for achieving this objective in the longer term. After debate in the Council and in the Parliament about this approach more detailed proposals will be developed in 2003.