Common fisheries policy: monitoring of implementation. Report 1996-1999

2002/2001(COS) - 28/09/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: To offer a comprehensive analysis on the control systems for the common fisheries policies.
CONTENT: Council Regulation 2847/93/EEC, known as the "Control Regulation", entered into force on 1 January 1994. It defines the legal framework of minimum requirements applicable throughout the Community and beyond EU fishing waters to fishing activities by Community fishing vessels. This Report responds to obligations laid down in the Controlling Regulation and covers the period 1996-1999. The main thrust of the Report is to provide a thorough examination of control and enforcement under the common fisheries polices. The Report is accompanied by separate Working Documents entitled "Fisheries Control in Member States", each summarising the main features of the respective national control system based on Member State submissions. Divided into a number of Chapters, the Report seeks to cover all aspects of the Control Regulation. The following headings are thus evaluated: - National control frameworks. This reports on national governments framework programmes for implementing the control framework. Overall, the Commission notes a strong discrepancy in framework programmes from one Member State to another. - Human Resources. The Commission examines Member State commitment to controlling Community fisheries through their resource programmes. Again, a picture emerges showing that staffing and resource levels vary considerable from Member State to Member State. - Monitoring Systems. Each flag Member State is responsible for the proper recording of data on fishing activities in its territory and as well as fishing activities carried out by its vessels. Despite improvements of national monitoring systems, the Commission considers the overall progress made unsatisfactory. - Inspection and surveillance activities. National governments are responsible for ensuring adequate and proper inspection and surveillance of fishing activities in its territorial waters. The Report notes a deficit in the means available and in the training of inspectors, cumbersome procedural demands and irrational programming. Beyond Community waters most of the inspections are conducted through international organisations such as NAFO and NEAFC. - Control of the Fleets. New entries in the fishing fleet are regulated by Member States within their national licensing schemes. National objectives to reducing the number of the fleet has not been effective enough. Furthermore, the control of fleet register data as well as the reduction in fishing capabilities have fallen short of their objectives. - Implementation of sanctions. Pursuing infringements and sanctions is the responsibility of Member States. The Commission expresses concern that the current efficiency of sanctions and infringements is, overall, too permissive. Fishermen, it is feared, are thus not being deterred from breaking EU provisions on fishing. To conclude, the Report notes that the control of fishing activities in Community waters does vary considerably. Whilst some Member States may be ahead of others the Commission is concerned that the widespread picture does not look encouraging. As the Report notes, the overall success of control will be asstrong as the weakest link in the chain.