

Agenda 2000: Financial instrument for fisheries guidance, application FIG, structural assistance

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This communication concerns the report to the Council and the European Parliament on the progress of the fourth multi-annual guidance programme (MAGP IV) for the fishing fleets. The report is produced each year in accordance with the provisions of Article 5 of Council Regulation 2792/1999/EC. These annual reports aim to ensure the transparent implementation of the MAGP IV, which fixes fleet capacity and fishing effort objectives that must be achieved progressively over the period 1.1.1997 to 31.12.2001. This year's report is on the progress of the programmes at the end of 2000. Using the data from the fishing vessel register of the Community and the reports submitted to the Commission by the national authorities, it summarises the evolution of the tonnage and power of the fleets in comparison with the intermediate and final objectives of the MAGP IV. The report is therefore entirely factual. In its conclusion, the report notes that during the first four years of the MAGP IV, the Community fleet was reduced by 49,983 GT and 459,866 kW, which represent reductions in fleet capacity of approximately 2.5% and 5.9% respectively. The decrease in tonnage is likely to be an underestimate, since no account has been taken of the progressive remeasurement of the fleet in units of GT. This also partly explains why, in last year's report on the results of the MAGP IV at the end of 1999, the decrease in tonnage was estimated to be somewhat greater, at 4%. At 1 January 2001 the Community fleet was already approximately 17% below the final MAGP IV objectives in terms of tonnage and 12% below the final MAGP IV objectives in terms of power. The reasons for this have been discussed at length in the report from the Commission to the Council for the preparation of a mid term review of the MAGP IV 7. The reductions called for by the MAGP IV were so modest (about 3% in capacity over the five year period) that the Community fleet as a whole was already within the final objectives before the start of the programme. A reduction of 3% in capacity over five years would certainly not be sufficient to counter increases in fishing effort due to technological progress over the same period, and must be contrasted with the scientific advice that there is currently about 40% over-capacity in the European fleet. Despite the modesty of the reductions required under the MAGP, many Member States have failed to reach their targets in some segments of the fleet. Some Member States have even substantially increased the capacity of certain segments that were already outside their MAGP objectives. That such results have been presented without further comment in the present, purely factual report, does not imply inaction on the part of the Commission. The Commission is currently considering action against several Member States for failure to take sufficient measures to meet their obligations under MAGP.