EC/Greenland fisheries agreement, 4th protocol: mid term review

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PURPOSE : to present the mid-term review of the fourth fisheries Protocol between the EU and Greenland. CONTENT : the fourth protocol of the fisheries agreement with Greenland entered into force in January 2001 and is subject to a mid-term review clause, according to which the Commission will have to submit proposals no later than the end of February 2003. The aim of the present communication is to explain why this review, far from being a routine operation, requires addressing now the political challenge facing the future of European Union - Greenland relations. It then lays down the main features of a political commitment between EU, Greenland and the Danish Kingdom, ensuring that after 2007, the relations will be based on a comprehensive partnership for sustainable development. Lastly, it sets out a framework for negotiation between the Commission and the Greenland authorities with the view of adjusting the fourth protocol on fisheries within the expected time schedule of the mid-term review. In the light of the present strategy for a long term relationship between the EU and Greenland, the Commission believes that the Greenland authorities should consider a significant modification of the 4 th fisheries protocol from 2003 onwards. Considering that the annual financial compensation foreseen by the protocol until the end of 2006 should remain unchanged, the Commission will propose to the Greenland authorities: - to agree on catch quotas that are in line with fishing possibilities estimated on the basis of scientific advice, even though this will accentuate the discrepancy between the value of fishing possibilities and the amount of the financial compensation; - to amend the protocol in order to earmark some of the financial compensation for the structural reform of Greenland's fisheries industry and to promote responsible fishing in its waters. The measures envisaged to do this would be programmed, implemented monitored by Greenland, which would produce an annual statement of the cost and benefits of the measures financed. It is also necessary to support the transition to a more articulated form of co-operation, to be outlined in a country strategy paper. During the transitional period, financial aid should continue to be provided along the lines of a budgetary support; thereafter, the most appropriate instrument will be used. As soon as possible and in any case 2005 at the latest, the specific needs and constraints of Greenland relating to human resources and institutional aspects should be assessed, with a view to ensuring that Community aid achieves the best possible efficiency and sound financial management, as it is normally done when the Community grants funds in this form.