

The crisis in the Community's fishing industry

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The Commission communication recommends a series of initiatives to resolve the crisis in the fisheries sector, while stressing that there is no question of restrictions on imports and that structural measures are the best way of safeguarding the future of the fisheries sector. According to the Commission, the crisis in the fisheries sector needs global action by all interested parties and will only be overcome by taking a series of simultaneous initiatives to conserve fish stocks and control fishing activities, structures and markets. Consequently: - stock management should be stepped up and controls made more efficient; - controls of catches should be stepped up; - measures to eliminate overcapacities in fisheries are the first step towards resolving the crisis on the markets for fisheries products and need to be supplemented by social and economic support measures to reform and reconvert the sector (e.g. bringing fish-dependent zones under the Structural Funds, Community "Pesca" initiative, cofinancing of voluntary and/or early retirement schemes, temporary Community incentives to implement minimum income and bad weather compensation schemes, training of fishermen); - management of the markets should be improved by strengthening the role of producer organizations (a posteriori examination procedure as regards extending schemes to non-members, improving exchanges of information, incentives for organizations which introduce quality improvement plans, obligation for all producers to comply with the Community withdrawal price in the event of serious disturbances of market conditions). As far as income support for producers is concerned, the Commission proposes a measure which makes provision for financial compensation for withdrawals to be increased to 95% of the applicable withdrawal price for a limited period in order to ease the cash flow of producer organizations which comply with the Community withdrawal price in the event of serious disturbances of market conditions.