General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean: accession of the Community

1997/0059(AVC) - 26/02/1997 - Initial legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to allow the European Community to accede to the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean (GFCM). SUBSTANCE: as a result of this proposal the European Community would accede to the GFCM where up to now it has had observer status. This accession forms one of the measures taken by the Community to establish a fisheries policy in the Mediterranean (as the common fisheries policy does not contain provisions on the Mediterranean as regards conservation and management of fishery resources). The GFCM is a subsidiary body of the FAO, set up by an international agreement concluded in Rome on 24 September 1949. Its objective is to ensure the management and conservation of living marine resources in the Mediterranean. To this end it keeps under review the state of resources and the state of the fisheries based thereon and it formulates recommendations for the conservation of living marine resources. The GFCM also keeps under review the economic and social aspects of the fishing industry and encourages training, research and development in all aspects of fisheries. At present four Member States have acceded individually to the GFCM (Italy, Greece, Spain and France). The current proposal for accession is not opposed to these countries remaining within this organization alongside the Community, provided that the latter's competence was respected. A joint declaration annexed to the text of the proposal gives details of this sharing of competences and states that this situation will not be a precedent for the accession of the Community to other fisheries organizations and does not justify reviewing the situation with regard to organizations in which the Community alone participates. By virtue of this declaration the Community has exclusive competence for items dealing with the conservation and management of living marine resources while the four Member States concerned have competence for legal, budgetary and procedural issues raised within the GFCM. There are several areas (statistics, aquaculture, research and development aid) where there is shared competence and voting rights lie with the Member States or the Community depending on the subject concerned.