Fisheries products in the Union: responsability, partnership, competitiveness

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OBJECTIVE: To bring about an extensive debate with all the parties concerned with a view to revision of the Community market in fisheries products. On the basis of this debate the Commission will adopt measures and make proposals in this area before the end of 1998. Responses to this document are expected before 30 June1998. SUBSTANCE: the Commission communication considers that future action in the fisheries sector should centre on three main objectives: (1) responsibility: the fishing industry is to be encouraged to take greater responsibility in managing the market and fish stocks to ensure sustainability; (2) partnership: there must be closer cooperation between all the operators in the production and distribution chain; (3) competitiveness: in view of the very competitive nature of the world market in fisheries products, only the most competitive producers in the EU will in future have a sECUre place on the international market; competitiveness must therefore be encouraged. The communication also aims to respond to the concerns expressed at international level, to ensure that responsible fishing goes hand-in-hand with responsible trade in fisheries products. It also points out the need to take into account all the factors which affect fisheries markets in Europe, including trade policy, consumer information and safety and improvement in product quality. In this context the Commission identifies a number of measures concerned with changes to the law and other measures to promote a more integrated market based on quality: - adoption of new rules on the minimum size of fish sold within the EU, - making certain adjustments to the conditions for recognition of producer organizations and encouraging inter-sectoral organizations and transnational producer organizations, - setting stricter conditions for intervention buying of unsold fish, to reduce the quantity of the limited resources which are thus destroyed, - adopting measures to further encourage contractual sales between producer organizations and the food industry, - adopting a Community 'demonstration programme' aiming to show how information technology can help to improve transparency on the market by helping to effectively concentrate supply and demand, - granting increased financial support for quality systems and promotion campaigns.