Diversification of fishing activities

1998/0274(CNS) - 04/09/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: specific measure to encourage diversification out of certain fishing activities.
SUBSTANCE: Council Regulation (EC) No 894/97 laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources, as recently amended by Regulation (EC) No 1239/98, prohibits fishing with driftnets intended for the capture of certain species from 01/01/2002. This ban applies to five Member States: Spain, Ireland, Italy, France and the United Kingdom. In the case of Italy, a variety of accompanying measures were implemented in 1997 on a voluntary basis. As the Council has already adopted a specific decision concerning this programme (Decision 97/292/EC), there is no need to adopt a new specific measure for Italian fishermen. However, in the interests of clarity it is proposed that Decision 97/292/EC be amended so as to list the cases in which cumulation of aid is permitted. The proposal is aimed at two categories of beneficiaries: fishermen serving on board and owners of vessels. Provision is made for two types of aid: for the permanent cessation of all economic activity and for conversion. The proposal only lays down the maximum amounts of aid. Member States are to adjust these in line with the actual economic or social loss resulting from the ban on fishing. They are also to take into account the cost of conversion and the age of the vessels. In relation to the ad hoc decision concerning Italy, the new proposal aims to: - simplify the procedures while maintaining equal treatment for Italian fishermen on the one hand and for Spanish, French, Irish and UK fishermen on the other; - limit implementation to 1999 (no specific compensation for suspension of fishing activities is provided for); - introduce a derogation to the rules on aid for modernisation of vessels laid down in Regulation (EC) No 3699/93 so as to raise the ceiling on eligible expenditure and decrease the rate of participation by beneficiaries.