

Agenda 2000: Financial instrument for fisheries guidance, application FIFG, structural assistance

1998/0347(CNS) - 17/12/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE : to lay down detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries sectors. **COMMUNITY MEASURE** : Council Regulation 2792/1999/EC laying down the detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries sector. **CONTENT** : the structural activities have as their objective to contribute to the restructuring of the fisheries sector by creating ideal conditions for its development and its modernisation. To this effect, they make up an integral part of the common fisheries policy. The structural activities aim to : achieve a lasting balance between aquatic resources and their exploitation, in particular by introducing a fleet renewal system which makes an effective contribution adjusting fishing capacity, while at the same time, enabling the fleet to be modernised ; strengthen competitiveness and contribute to the development of economically viable enterprises throughout the production chain; - improve the supply of fishery and aquaculture products and add to their value ; help revitalise areas dependent on fishing. The new Regulation adopted by the Council is based on the following elements : - fleet renewal and modernisation of fishing vessels : each Member State shall submit to the Commission permanent arrangements for monitoring fleet renewal and modernisation. Within the framework of these arrangements, Member States shall demonstrate that entries and exits from the fleet will be managed in such a way that the capacity does not exceed the annual objectives fixed in the Multiannual Guidance Programme, overall and for the segments concerned, or, where appropriate, that fishing capacity is gradually reduced to attain these objectives. These arrangements shall, in particular, take into account that the capacity which has been withdrawn with public aid cannot be replaced. Vessels of less than 12 metres length excluding trawlers, however, are exempted. Member States can submit a request for a clearly identified and quantified increase in the capacity objectives for measures to improve safety, navigation at sea, hygiene, product quality and working conditions provided that these measures do not result in an increase in the exploitation rate of the resources concerned. Public aid for fleet renewal and the modernisation of vessels shall only be permitted under the following conditions : - where the annual objectives overall and for the segments concerned are respected, Member States must ensure that during the programming period from 2000 to 2006 the entry of new capacity with public aid is compensated by the withdrawal of a capacity without public aid which is at least equal to the new capacity introduced in the segments concerned, taken in aggregate and in terms of both tonnage and power; - until 31.12.2001, where the overall objective is met but where the annual objectives of the segments concerned are not yet respected, Member States must ensure that during the period from 2000 to 2001 the withdrawal of capacity must be at least 30% greater than the new capacity introduced in the segments concerned ; - public aid may also be granted for the equipping or modernising of vessels where this does not concern capacity measured in terms of either tonnage or power. The Council shall decide by 31.12.2001 on any necessary adjustments to be applied as from 01.01.2002. The Member States may take, for fishermen, measures of a socio-economic nature. Financial assistance from the FIFG (Financial Instrument for Fishing Guidance) may be granted only for the following measures : - part-financing of national early-retirement schemes for fishermen ; - granting individual compensatory payments to fishermen who can show that they have worked for at least 12 months as fishermen ; - granting non-renewable individual compensatory payments to fishermen who can show that they have worked for at least 5 years as fishermen, to help them retrain or diversify their activities outside maritime fisheries under an individual or collective social plan ; - granting individual premiums to fishermen younger than 35 years old who acquire for the first time part or total ownership of a fishing vessel. 2) permanent withdrawal : if the case arises, the fishing effort may be adjusted by putting an end to fishing activities of the vessels. This measure is only applicable to vessels which are at least 10 years old. The permanent withdrawal of fishing activities can be attained by : - the scrapping of the vessel ; - the permanent transfer of the vessel to a third country ; - the permanent reassignment of the vessels for other purposes than fishing. Public aid for final cessation is provided for, under the conditions defined in the

Regulation. This aid can also be extended to cases where vessels are transferred to joint enterprises in third countries, in accordance with special provisions laid down in the text. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 02.01.2000. However, some provisions from previous Regulations governing structural actions in the fisheries sector (Regulations 2468/98/EC 3759/92/EEC and 3140/82/EEC in particular) shall remain applicable for aid, measures and projects approved before 31.12.1999.