Specific action for transfers of vessels to countries hit by the tsunami in 2004

2005/0005(CNS) - 24/02/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament gave its support (by 429 votes in favour, 105 against, and 26 abstentions) to the Council Regulation which allows the transferring of fishing vessels to regions affected by the tsunami. The draft regulation aims to compensate those who send their vessels to the region. Only vessels destined to be scrapped or reused for other purposes than fishing will be sent. Parliament adopted a series of amendments to the regulation, aiming at tightening it up. Parliament insisted that the vessels meet the needs of the local fishing industry, notably in relation to the size and the equipment of the vessels.

The Member States which authorise the transfer must ensure that the vessel is fully seaworthy, equipped for fishing activity, suitable for fishing activities in the third countries concerned and transferred to a region affected by the tsunami for the benefit of the fishing communities having suffered the consequences of it and must ensure that there will be no adverse effects either on the sustainability of fisheries resources or on the local economy.

Parliament highlights that the aid and technical assistance should have as its priority objectives:

- reconstruction of shipyards for the purpose of building fishing vessels;

- rehabilitation of fishing ports;

- rehabilitation of the port infrastructures needed for the unloading and sale of catch;

- reconstruction and equipment of freezer storage facilities.

Lastly, the European Parliament equally states that the transfer should be accompanied by appropriate training and educational measures, in order to ensure that fishermen are sufficiently knowledgeable and have the necessary skills to work the equipment, guaranteeing safety on board vessels and the overall sustainability of fisheries. Parliament set out that Member States should notify the Commission within 2 months of the vessels for which a transfer is envisaged as well as the intended destination.