2006-2008 action plan for simplifying and improving the Common Fisheries Policy

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PURPOSE : to adopt an action plan for 2006-2008 to simplify and improve the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

CONTENT : this plan is part of the Commission-wide process aimed at encouraging better regulation. Detailed proposals were drawn up on the basis of the Council's Conclusions on simplifying the CFP and an extensive consultation process with Member States and the fishing industry.

In order to simplify and improve the CFP, in the light of all earlier initiatives and of the consultations with the parties concerned, the Commission is:

- **proposing a methodology** attuned to the characteristic features of the common fisheries policy;

- **indicating the initiatives that should, as a matter of priority, be simplified and improved** by spelling out, on a case-by-case basis, the simplifying measures to be taken.

The aims of the CFP simplification exercise are to ensure that legislative texts are clear and unambiguous; to ensure that both fishermen and national administrators have access to the information they need in a concise and easily-understood form and to reduce the burden of work that currently falls upon these two groups of stakeholders as a result of unnecessary complications in regulation.

The plan identifies a series of priority initiatives for the next three years concentrated on two key areas: conservation and control.

With regard to the policy for **conserving** fish stocks, after consulting the Member States and the industry in accordance with the principles set out above, the Commission proposes that priority be given to simplifying legislation concerning:

- the management and conservation of certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Community waters and, in the case of Community vessels, in waters subject to catch limitations**;**

- measures for the conservation of fish stocks through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms;

- the collection and management of data needed for implementing the common fisheries policy.

With regard to **monitoring**, following wide-ranging consultations with the stakeholders, the Commission will present a series of proposals for revising the existing provisions in particular through increased use of computerisation and automation of certain procedures in order to reduce reporting obligations significantly.

By focusing on conservation and control, the Commission hopes to improve working conditions for both fishermen and public officials in the fisheries sector thus encouraging the effective, efficient and transparent application of the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Action Plan includes specific commitments to earlier and fuller consultation, and to greater stakeholder involvement not only in shaping policy, but in ensuring that fishermen in particular are kept fully informed of their rights and obligations.

Lastly, the Action Plan also confirms other recent initiatives taken by the Commission as part of the reform of the CFP, including: the adoption of a multi-annual approach to conservation strategy; targeting conservation instruments by region or by fishery; taking better account of interactions between fishing and the environment in research and data collection; and extending the use of advanced technologies, including IT systems, in control, monitoring and reporting.