Fisheries: additional costs, remoteness of the Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands, Guyana, Réunion, compensation scheme for 2007-2013

2006/0247(CNS) - 26/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Duarte **FREITAS** (EPP-ED, PT) amending the proposed regulation introducing a scheme to compensate for the additional costs incurred in the marketing of certain fishery products from the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the French departments of Guiana and Réunion from 2007 to 2013. It wanted to increase by EUR 2 million a year the budget for outermost regions to compensate for the additional costs incurred in the marketing of certain fishery products, due to increases in energy and transport costs. It also proposed that compensation be allowed for products used in fish processing, since this would not constitute an accumulation of EU aid. In addition, compensation should not be restricted to 75% of transport costs, but should be sufficient to offset fully the additional costs arising from remoteness and should cover the cost of transport to the European continent and also between regions.

The main amendments were as follows:

- the support scheme should be a permanent one and not limited in time. Parliament therefore amended the title so as to delete the words “from 2007 to 2013”;

- the increased transport costs resulting from higher oil prices since 2003, which have added to the additional costs arising from remoteness, should be taken into account. Compensation should not be restricted to 75% of transport costs, as stated in the Commission proposal, and should cover the costs of transport not only to the European continent but also between regions;

- the additional costs linked to the use of products used in fish processing (such as olive oil and salt) should also be eligible for support, provided that such compensation does not overlap with Community aid for those products;

- a new article stipulated that the Commission may authorise state aid for the fisheries sector for the outermost regions. In such cases, the Member States must notify the Commission of the aid as part of the compensation schemes, and the Commission must approve it;

- as provided for under the previous scheme, it should continue to be permissible for local processing industries to be supplied by Community vessels in cases where catches by local fleets "are insufficient to supply those regions' processing industries";

- three amendments adjusted the amounts allocated to the Azores and Madeira, the Canary Islands and French Guiana and Réunion, thereby increasing the annual overall budget by EUR 2 million;

- a new article stipulated that, within the limits of the overall financial framework for the regulation, it should be possible for the amounts of compensation to be modulated among regions belonging to the same Member State ;

- on the basis of an independent evaluation the Commission should report every 5 years, with effect from 31 December 2011, on the implementation of the compensation scheme.