Common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products

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PURPOSE: Commission report on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products.

CONTENT: the Commission presents this report following Article 41 of Council Regulation (EC) No 104 /2000, which requires a report on the implementation of this Regulation. It is based upon stocktaking of the application of the common organisation of the markets ("the CMO"). Moreover, the Commission services organised consultations by way of questionnaires and received responses from 22 Member States and 3 stakeholders.

The CMO was the first component of the Common Fisheries Policy ("the CFP"). Ever since, it has become one of the CFP pillars. The CMO was created to provide market stability and to guarantee a fair income for producers.

The current CMO laid down in Regulation 104/2000 has moved away from a mere intervention system and now lays more emphasis on sustainability-supportive fishing and marketing activities. The CMO is run on the basis of 23 implementing Regulations. The 2003 Act of Accession introduced sprat and dolphin-fish and added new marketing sizes for Baltic herring.

The Commission examines in this report a number of issues, such as common marketing standards, consumer information, producer organisations, interbranch organisations, prices and intervention, and trade with third countries.

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

- the policy to reduce the levels of intervention has proved to be effective. The expenses derived from withdrawals have decreased in accordance with the objectives of Regulation No 104/2000. A steady shift from wasteful withdrawals to carry-over operations can be observed. Recourse to intervention very much differs with the Member States;

- the operation of the CMO has confirmed the important role of Producer Organisations. The introduction of operational programmes as a tool for balancing supply and demand has been well received by both Member States and Pos;

- the introduction of inter-branch organisations was not a success. This may reflect an unsatisfactory co-operation between the different operators of the marketing chain. In 2005 there were only 4 organisations recognised in 3 Member States;

- market prices have not followed trends in production costs in spite of the establishment of conservation measures and recovery plans for a number of species. This makes the balancing out of the objectives laid down in Article 33 of the Treaty even more complex;

- the Community market is increasingly dependent on imports from third countries in order to satisfy the needs of consumers and processing industry.