


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 1997/2168(COS)	Procedure completed
Multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1996 (regul. 3699/93/EEC). Annual report	
Subject 3.15.01 Fish stocks, conservation of fishery resources 3.15.04 Management of fisheries, fisheries, fishing grounds	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	PECH Fisheries	PPE CUNHA Arlindo	04/09/1997
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
11/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0352	Summary
15/09/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/02/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
03/02/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0046/1998	
13/03/1998	Debate in Parliament		
13/03/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0169/1998	Summary
13/03/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/04/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2168(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/4/09111

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1997)0352	11/07/1997	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0046/1998 OJ C 080 16.03.1998, p. 0004	03/02/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0169/1998 OJ C 104 06.04.1998, p. 0263-0278	13/03/1998	EP	Summary

Multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1996 (regul. 3699/93/EEC). Annual report

OBJECTIVE: presentation of the Commission's Annual Report on the results of the multiannual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1996. SUBSTANCE: this report is the fifth in the series and is the final report on the results of the third generation of multiannual guidance programmes (MGPIII) which fixed objectives for reducing the size of the fishing fleet for each Member State over the period 1992 - 1996. The Commission believes that the annual guidance programmes had been effective in reducing the overcapacity of the European fleets. During the period 1991 - 1996, the fleet's tonnage has been reduced by approximately 300 000 GRT and its power by approximately 790 000 kW, or by about 15% and 9.5% respectively. The capacity of the fleet on 31 December 1996 was 11% below the global objectives for tonnage and 5% below the global objectives for power. These results were, in general, very satisfactory. For the Member States who had not reached their objectives, there were two main consequences: - aid for fleet renewal and modernization was to be withheld. The Commission was in the process of examining the case of each of the Member States concerned to ensure that this requirement was met; - the backlog from the MGP III was to be made up under the conditions that applied to the MGP III. This meant that at least 55% of the backlog should be made up by a reduction in capacity. The Commission notes that there are also marked differences between the Member States in the extent to which the information in the fleet register has been kept up to date and reliable. This is particularly the case with respect to the estimation or remeasurement of vessels in units of GT, which should have been completed in 1995. These data would be of vital importance for the successful transition from the GRT objectives of MGP III to the GT objectives of MGP IV. The Commission reserves the right to initiate the appropriate procedures concerning the Member States that had not complied with the multiannual guidance programmes within the time period envisaged or had not established the means to monitor the programmes or the means to inform the Commission of the exact situation of their fleets with respect to the objectives of the programmes. ?

Multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1996 (regul. 3699/93/EEC). Annual report

The conservation of fishery resources is crucial to the future of the EU fishing industry. In order to manage resources better, multiannual guidance programmes (MGPs) designed to reduce the overall amount of fish caught were introduced, starting in the early 1980s. Every year the Commission reports on the results of the MGPs and Parliament is required to deliver an opinion on the Commission's assessment, which is particularly significant this year as it is the final report on the third MGP (covering the period 1992-96). A new programme (the fourth MGP) will cover the period 1997-2001. The Committee adopted a report (under the consultation procedure) by Arlindo CUNHA (EPP, P) which puts forward various practical proposals designed to bring the capacity of fishing fleets into line with the available resources. The first suggestion concerns sanctions. According to the committee's report, only genuinely effective penalties such as virtually automatic quota reductions will make Member States comply with the objectives of the MGPs. Mr Cunha believes that present measures (such as the abolition of Structural Fund subsidies for the renewal and modernisation of fleets) do not have a sufficient deterrent effect because they do not impinge enough on the substantial profits made by vessel-owners from overfishing stocks of certain species of fish. In addition, the report calls for Member States to undertake to measure their fleet capacity in accordance with EU criteria and says that this procedure ought to be completed in the course of the current year. According to Mr CUNHA, some Member State administrations are reluctant to forward reliable data on their fleets to the Commission, with the result that the capacity reductions needed are constantly postponed to subsequent programmes. Moreover, the report argues that not only do the problems over standardising ways of measuring tonnage need to be overcome: there is also a need for standard EU criteria for calculating engine power. Mr Cunha draws a fairly gloomy picture of the overall achievements of the MGPs. Although the targets for catch reductions were much more modest than those recommended by experts, the results have been disappointing and, above all, have varied greatly from country to country. Broadly speaking, the reductions achieved in countries such as Denmark, Spain and Portugal have made up for the lack of real progress in other Member States. Distortions of this kind are dangerous as they are likely to cause the States which have met their obligations to ask what the point of their efforts - in both economic and social terms - has been, when other States are making little or no sacrifice. ?

Multi-annual guidance programmes for the fishing fleets at the end of 1996 (regul. 3699/93/EEC). Annual report

In adopting the report by Mr Arlindo CUNHA (PPE, P), the European Parliament urged the Council to review the system of penalties for failing to comply with the objectives of multiannual guidance programmes (MGPs) for fishing fleets with a view to providing effective sanctions, such as a quasi-automatic reduction in the quotas for a Member State found to be in breach. In addition to penalties, Parliament stressed other points as well. Firstly, it called on the Member States to measure the capacity of their fleets in accordance with the agreed Community criteria. This should be completed before the end of the year. It also called on the Commission to submit proposals without delay on harmonizing provisions on the power of vessels so as to ensure that the situation of all the fleets could be compared. Member States which had not yet achieved the objectives of MGP III should without delay adopt measures to do so. ?

