

The Commission (Directorate General Fisheries) met on 30 October 2001 a delegation of the European Federation of Aquaculture Producers on this issue. At this meeting it clearly appeared that the only possible actions are on the one hand to improve co-ordination of the producers (through, if necessary, the setting up of Producers Organisations), and possibly to launch marketing actions. These actions are to be taken by the producers themselves, but could benefit some financial assistance in the framework of the respective national financial instrument for fisheries guidance Structural Funds programmes.

The situation of the market for farmed sea bass and sea bream was also discussed at the meeting of the Management Committee for Fisheries Products on 9 April 2002 and at a special meeting between the Commission and the Member States most concerned on 16 May 2002. None of these meetings has given a clear view of whether there is a structural crisis or whether problems currently encountered are of a seasonal nature. In this respect, the Member States concerned committed to gather further information with a view to carry out a more in-depth analysis of the situation of the market for these species. A new meeting on this issue, in which will participate also representatives from the industry, is scheduled for autumn 2002.

The Commission is also examining the possibility of undertaking a study concerning the market situation of seabass and seabream.

(2003/C 52 E/197)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2488/02

by Giorgio Lisi (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(6 September 2002)

Subject: Impact of the forthcoming enlargement on customs officials

Since a number of candidate countries will become part of the European Union in 2004 and the customs barriers with those countries will be abolished, what steps does the Commission intend to take regarding possible compensation (as in the case of the previous enlargement) for staff involved in customs formalities?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission

(15 October 2002)

As referred to by the Honourable Member, the Council launched in 1992 a 30 MECU action programme designed to retrain and re-employ custom agents and allowed Member States to use Community structural funds (European Social Fund and Interreg I) to introduce accompanying measures (Council Regulation (EEC) No 3904/92 of 17 December 1992 on measures to adapt the profession of customs agent to the internal market⁽¹⁾). It established also a training programme to help national administrations reorganise their custom operations (Council Decision No 94/844/EC of 19 December 1994 establishing specific common programmes for the vocational training of customs officials, with regard to preferential systems, the control of containers, processing under customs control, and warehouse regimes (Matthaeus programme)⁽²⁾).

A similar issue was raised in Commission Communication concerning the employment aspects of the decision to abolish tax- and duty-free sales for intra-Community travellers⁽³⁾. At this point, the Commission encouraged Member States to apply for assistance under the Structural Funds or for securing approval of State aid under the relevant guidelines laid down by the Commission. It did not propose a new and separate measure.

The Commission intends to adopt the same approach as regards custom agents who will be concerned by the forthcoming enlargement.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 394, 31.12.1992.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 352, 31.12.1994.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 66, 9.3.1999.
