

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4775/07
by Niels Busk (ALDE) and Ole Christensen (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Call for action to counteract adverse developments in the days-at-sea scheme

The introduction of the days-at-sea scheme has left Danish fishermen in an unfortunate situation whereby numerous boats are laid up in port while the days at sea allocated to them are transferred to an active boat, which optimises its catch capacity while the other ships remain inactive.

This transfer scheme appears sensible at first sight, since it promotes innovation and development in the fishing fleet, which will eventually consist of fewer, more effective boats, and thus comply with the Commission's wishes to reduce the number of fishing vessels and gradually restrict fishing with a view to increasing long-term sustainability.

However, the Commission's answer of 16 May to the question on the accumulation of decommissioned fishing boats in European ports (P-2007/07) is full of uncertainty; the permanent scheme calls for more appropriate and long-term management, rather than the doubts which currently prevail. Fisheries need transparency and long-term legislation, otherwise it becomes impossible to prioritise and invest.

The Commissioner has in the past expressed sympathy for the situation of the Danish fishermen. We therefore hope that the Commission will be able to improve conditions for Danish fishermen, who have shown a great willingness to cooperate with the Commission.

To what extent is the Commission aware of the scale of the problem?

What initiatives can be expected in this area?

Will the Commission extend the validity of the existing agreement for a longer period?