WRITTEN QUESTION E-1795/09
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to the Commission

Subject: Financial assistance from the European Fisheries Fund for investments in aquaculture and the processing and marketing sector

Under the provisions of Regulation (EC) Regulation 1198/2006[1] the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) may support productive investments in aquaculture (Article 29) and investments in the processing and marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products (Articles 34 and 35).

The percentage of the public contribution to very small, small and medium-sized enterprises in the above sectors may attain 60% of the investment cost for regions covered by the Convergence objective and 40% for regions not covered by the Convergence objective (Annex II of the Regulation).

For enterprises which do not fall within the above categories, but employ fewer than 750 employees or have an annual turnover of less than 200 million euros, the percentage of the public contribution is reduced by 30% for regions covered and 20% for regions not covered by the Convergence objective.

However, the international financial crisis and the low market prices of the products concerned have created problems which are having a significant impact on the economic situation of enterprises engaged in aquaculture and in the processing and marketing sector, directly jeopardising their viability and employment in this area.

These consequences have now become severe for enterprises which employ large numbers of workers and which contribute substantially to increasing employment and meeting the market demand in aquaculture products.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1.   Does it intend to revise the public contribution figures for aquaculture investments, regardless of the size of the enterprise and the Convergence objective?

2.   What measures is it planning to take to protect jobs in aquaculture enterprises and does it intend to support these jobs with financial incentives?

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[1]   OJ L 223, 15.8.2006, p.1.