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DOCUMENT 101/79

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs,
Employment and Education

**on the coordination of the activities of fisheries auxiliary vessels at
Community level**

Rapporteur : Mr L. KAVANAGH

On 3 May 1978 Mr BERKHOUWER tabled a motion for a resolution (Doc. 77/78) on Community measures for auxiliary vessels of Member States and of associations and foundations with legal personality, established in Member States, which provide medical and technical assistance at sea to Community fishermen exercising their profession inside and outside the waters of the European Economic Community. On 8 May 1978 the European Parliament referred this motion for a resolution to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Regional Policy, Regional Planning and Transport for its opinion.

Mr BERKHOUWER withdrew this motion for a resolution on 19 January 1979 and replaced it by a motion for a resolution (Doc. 573/78) on the coordination of the activities of fisheries auxiliary vessels at Community level. On 19 January 1979 this motion for a resolution was also referred by the European Parliament to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Budgets for their opinions.

On 1 February 1979 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education appointed Mr KAVANAGH rapporteur.

It considered the matter at its meetings of 21 and 25 September 1978 and of 20 February and 23 March 1979, and at its meeting of 3 April 1979 approved this report by 11 votes in favour with two abstentions.

Present : Mr Van der GUN, chairman; Mrs DUNWOODY, vice-chairman; Mr KAVANAGH, rapporteur; Mr ADAMS, Mr ALBERS, Mr BERTRAND, Mr BOUQUEREL, Mr DINESEN, Mr GEURTSEN, Mr PISONI, Mr SANTER, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI and Mr VANDEWIELE.

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The opinions of the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Budgets are attached.

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The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the coordination of the activities of fisheries auxiliary vessels at Community level

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr BERKHOUWER (Doc. 573/78),
- having regard to the report of its Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education and the opinions of the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 101/79),
- 1. Notes with appreciation the measure of de facto coordination between the activities of fisheries auxiliary vessels that has already been operated by the Member States for a number of years;
- 2. Takes the view, however, that despite this first move towards coordination, in respect of working conditions, fishermen are still far from enjoying the same standards of social measures and protection as apply to other shore-based occupations;
- 3. Considers, therefore, that such assistance as is now available to fishermen is quite inadequate;
- 4. Notes that the Community is required under Article 9 of Regulation No 101/76 laying down a common structural policy for the fishing industry (OJ No L 20/76, p. 21) to take measures to contribute to 'the improvement, in step with technical progress, of the standard and conditions of living of the population which depends on fishing for its livelihood';
- 5. Notes, moreover, that in paragraph 53 of its resolution of 16 December 1977 (OJ No C 6/78, p. 125) Parliament once again called on the Commission 'to begin preparation of an overall social policy for the fisheries sector covering such matters as ... safety both on board ship and at sea';

6. Requests the Commission, therefore, to submit proposals by mid-1979 at the latest (see paragraph 8 below) for the progressive improvement, intensification and expansion of the system of auxiliary vessels for the sea fishing industry;
7. Requests the Commission in this connection to examine whether the activities in question could be delegated by the Community, and under its supervision, to existing organizations or institutions possessing the necessary experience;
8. Requests the Commission to ensure that, with effect from 1980, an item is entered in the Community budget, as provided for inter alia in Article 18 of the draft directive on certain immediate measures to adjust capacity in the fisheries sector (Doc. 357/77 - IV = COM(77) 543 final), in order to ensure adequate support for the measures referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 of this resolution;
9. Calls on the Commission, within the framework of the action urged in paragraph 6, to aim ultimately at the overall coordination of existing services and institutions in the Member States that render assistance at sea to merchant and passenger vessels and pleasure craft, with a view to achieving the highest possible level of safety at sea.
10. Urges the Commission, on the basis of the legal bases referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this resolution, also to draw up as soon as possible proposals for an optimum programme of vocational training for deep-sea fishermen in the Member States, since this is a matter of general social significance and would help to improve safety standards for sea-going fishermen;
11. Requests the Commission also to consider how the Community could provide extra financial support for these actions from the European Social Fund;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the attached report to the Council and Commission of the European Communities and, for information, to the Joint Committee on Social Problems in Deep-sea Fishing.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. Present situation

1. In the Community of the Nine some 150,000 persons are employed in deep-sea fishing in the narrow sense of the term, that is, excluding those who work ashore. Some 65,000 are employed in deep-sea fishing in the Atlantic and northern waters, a fishing area covering more than 4 million km², or three times the area of the Community.

As a rule, fishing voyages are lengthy, and the crew's working conditions differ from those of virtually every other occupation in that the everyday technical, medical and logistic support, which is never very far away for anyone, does not exist. The objective of this parliamentary initiative is, therefore, to improve the facilities for assistance, that is, to put fishermen on a more equal footing with other occupations.

2. It is, of course, true that the crews are not entirely without assistance, because fisheries auxiliary vessels are stationed in the main fishing grounds to provide such medical, technical and logistic support and also ensure that weather reports are broadcast, including warnings of imminent bad weather.

At present, the following vessels are generally available:

- GODETIA	-	Belgium
TRUFFAUT		"
- MEERKATZE	-	Federal Republic of Germany
POSEIDON		"
FRITHJOF		"
NORDENHAM		"
MINDEN		"
ROTERSAND		"
- L'AGILE	-	France
LOIRE		"
TENACE		"
- De HOOP		Netherlands
- OTHELLO	-	United Kingdom
HAUSA		"
MIRANDA		"

Annex I illustrates the area covered by and the general location of these ships.

3. These vessels are, however, by no means permanently stationed in the fishing grounds. A report relating to 1975¹ shows that in that year the following assistance was actually available:

(i) To the west and south of Ireland

mid-February - mid-March	(L'Agile)
second half of June	"
November	"
(one auxiliary vessel during a few weeks in the year)	

(ii) Irish Sea - Bristol Channel - English Channel

second half of March	(Godetia)
second half of April	"
first half of October	"
first half of November	"
May to October inclusive	(De Hoop)
(that is, two auxiliary vessels during the summer and one over a somewhat longer period)	

(iii) North Sea

the whole year	(De Hoop, Frithjof, Poseidon)
June and September	(Godetia)
June	(Tenace)
October	(Truffaut)
January - May	(Loire)
September - December	"

(iv) Northern and eastern Icelandic waters

January - May	(Othello, Hausa, Miranda)
(three vessels for a period of 4 months)	

(v) Western and southern Icelandic waters

the whole year	(Meerkatze, Nordenham, Minden and Rotersand)
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(vi) Northern and Western Atlantic - Newfoundland¹

the whole year	(Frithjof, Poseidon)
January - May	(Loire)
September - December	"
(two vessels for the whole fishing area, and one further vessel for two quarters)	

¹ Doc. EEC: V/E/3: Annex II is an extract from this document, included as a specimen. See also point 13 of this explanatory memorandum

4. Of these vessels only the Godetia, the Meerkatze, the Frithjof and the De Hoop carry a full range of facilities, viz:

- doctor
- nurse
- sick-bay
- pharmacy
- technical assistance (supply of spares, fitters)
- supplies of drinking water
- supplies of fuel
- towing equipment
- radio transmitters, e.g. for broadcasting meteorological information.

In other words, there are available for all waters fished by Community vessels: 13 doctors or nurses, 12 sick bays, 9 pharmacies, 12 workshops, 7 vessels with facilities for supplying drinking water and 5 for supplying fuel. 13 auxiliary vessels have towing equipment, but not all the auxiliary vessels can give assistance by means of a radio transmitter.

It should be noted that this figure of 15 vessels was only attained in 1975; in the early 1970's there were only 6 vessels.

5. Some examples are given below to illustrate the achievements made over the last few decades in providing assistance at sea by means of auxiliary vessels.

The hospital ships 'Frithjof', 'Poseidon', 'Meerkatze', 'Nordenham', 'Rotersand' and 'Minden' treated a total of 52,764 patients in the period 1948-1977 (more than 1,750 per year).

The number of technical assistance missions was 265,286. The floating weather stations broadcast 310,871 weather reports. A total of 3,104,920 nautical miles was sailed. The abovementioned ships sail under the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Dutch hospital ship 'De Hoop'¹ treated 14,890 patients in the period 1952-1977 (almost 6,000 per year). In addition, 12,752 medical consultations were given by radiotelephone. The number of technical assistance missions was 4,539. The total number of nautical miles sailed was 424,235.

¹Also used for the holding of church services

Breakdown of treatment of 14,890 patients:

1. Surgical treatment	5,456 patients
2. Internal illnesses	3,539 "
3. Dental treatment	1,474 "
4. Optical treatment	590 "
5. Skin complaints	1,179 "
6. Ear, nose and throat	1,465 "
7. Neurological complaints	451 "
8. Psychiatric complaints	147 "
9. Rheumatism	144 "
10. Venereal disease	445 "

6. Finally, the following is a summary of the requirements which an auxiliary vessel (hospital ship) should meet from the medical point of view:

A hospital ship should have optimal sailing qualities. In particular, a high standard of stability is required and, for the sake of the patients, the motion of the ship should be as comfortable as possible.

Hospital ships which also operate in Arctic waters must be strong enough to cope with ice and must be fitted out with a modern and well-equipped weather station.

Hospital ships operating in waters in which groups of vessels fish at long distances from one another should also be equipped with a helicopter (North East Atlantic, Arctic waters, sub-tropical and tropical waters). This means that allowance must be made at the design stage for sufficient deck space, including a hangar on the afterdeck.

Hospital ships which will generally be providing assistance in sub-tropical or tropical waters (e.g. implementing the fisheries clause in the Convention of Lomé) need to be suitably equipped, and this ought preferably to be taken into account at the design stage. Here particular attention should be paid to the sick-bay, out-patients department, surgery, pharmacy, crews' quarters, galley, storeroom, engine room and workshops, and the bridge.

A well-equipped hospital ship should, as a minimum, have a modern sick-bay with 12 beds (two four-bed rooms and two two-bed rooms) as well as an isolation ward.

It should also have a pharmacy, an X-ray room, plasma and oxygen, a surgery, an outpatient's department with waiting room, and a day-ward for outpatients, with a library.

The majority of the hospital ships (auxiliary vessels) operating in Community waters and elsewhere generally meet the abovementioned requirements.

II. International organizations

7. With respect to safety at sea it should be noted that the Committee on Working Conditions in Deep-sea Fishing, set up in December 1962 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted a resolution which included the recommendation that a practical international manual should be compiled containing a list of the current directives relating to safety in maritime shipping, fishing activities and fishing as an occupation; this resolution also urged the ILO in association with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), to examine the possibility of setting up a body which could prepare a printed manual of this nature.

As part of its activities to protect human life at sea and improve safety on board, IMCO¹ agreed to cooperate in the compilation of a manual of this kind, which would consist of two parts: Part A, designed for masters and crew, and Part B, written specially for shipbuilders, shipowners and self-employed fishermen.

Part A, entitled 'Practical guidelines for the safety and hygiene of masters and crew' was approved at the joint FAO-ILO-IMCO meeting of advisers for safety on board fishing vessels which was held from 4 to 13 September 1968 at the ILO building in Geneva.

The first part runs to 90 pages and gives brief practical directives concerning navigation, safety of the vessel and safety on board the vessel, safety during fishing operations, a number of specific safety measures, life-saving appliances, fire prevention and fire-fighting techniques, appliances designed for use by the crews of fishing vessels, safety procedures when abandoning ship, survival techniques preceding rescue and rescue itself. This part also contains some annexes including, for example, a description of how radio-telephone equipment works and of the principal methods of artificial respiration.

¹ On 23 November 1978 the Council decided in principle in favour of European Community accession to IMCO (Council of Transport Ministers' press release No. 1356/78-Pressé 156)
See also: Written Question No. 927/78; OJ No. C 92/79; p. 10.

Part B¹, which deals with more technical matters, is still in preparation. An ad hoc Working Party, set up earlier and instructed to consider stability criteria for fishing vessels, was later replaced by a Subcommittee on the safety of fishing vessels which was asked to draw up for the Committee on Safety at Sea regulations on safety and hygiene which must be observed in the construction and outfitting of fishing vessels.

The first recommendation concerning stability criteria for fishing vessels was approved by the IMCO General Meeting at its fourth extraordinary session held from 26 to 28 November 1968. In the light of this recommendation, Resolution A.168 (ES.IV) was drawn up which dealt with the preparation of stability curves, average loading standards which must be taken into account when calculating stability, measures to be taken in the event of icing, the means by which the vessel's overall stability can be determined on the basis of roll duration, moveable bulkheads in the fish holds, loading and unloading doors, hatch-coamings and door sills. It also listed a number of precautions which masters and officers of fishing vessels must take. These measures constitute an initial general approach to problems relating to the safety of fishing vessels, especially with regard to the implications for stability.

A more complete set of rules now in preparation will include general provisions relating to the hull, freeboard, stability, engines and electrical equipment. The Committee on Safety at Sea has also approved a recommendation which is to be published as a separate document pending finalization of Part B of the document.

The committee has also considered and approved the harmonized definitions of the principal characteristics and other specific features of fishing vessels and has decided to recommend to all members of IMCO that they gradually begin utilizing these terms whenever possible in technical information relating to fishing vessels and, wherever possible, in their national legislation. At its most recent session the IMCO General Meeting also adopted (see Resolution A.207-VII of 12 October 1971) a recommendation on a provisional stability standard for fishing vessels having a deck less than 30 metres long.

On 15 October 1971 the General Meeting also adopted Resolution A.248 (VII) concerning the organization's long-term work programme. This programme scheduled a technical conference for 1975 at which safety provisions for fishing vessels could be drawn up.

8. At the 55th meeting of the General Conference of the International Labour Organization held in October 1970 in Geneva, the following texts were adopted:

Convention No. 134 and Recommendation No. 142 on the prevention of occupational accidents to seamen.

Despite the definitions set out in paragraph 1 of Article 1 of this Convention, it is apparently impossible to include fishermen under the terms of this Convention.

On the one hand, at the preparatory Conference held in Genoa in 1969 and again at the General Conference held in Geneva in 1970, the organizations representing both owners and fishermen were clearly not included as such in the various delegations.

¹ i.e. in 1972.

On the other hand, whenever the General Conference of the International Labour Organization examined or approved measures relating to fishing, such measures were always expressly mentioned in the titles of the various Conventions or Recommendations - e.g. Convention.No. 126: 'Convention on accommodation on board fishing vessels'.

Convention No. 134 and Recommendation No. 142 may still serve as a basis for possible initiatives in the fisheries sector.

III. Community

9. Following the partial implementation of a common fisheries policy, the Joint Committee on Social Problems in Deep-sea Fishing was set up in 1970 at Community level and forms part of the Commission's Directorate-General for Social Affairs. Consideration of these problems was one of that committee's earliest tasks.

In a document published in 1972 which concerned in particular medical assistance for deep-sea fishing vessels, the Joint Committee on Social Problems in Deep-sea Fishing made the following practical proposal:

'In order to extend Community medical and technical assistance on the high seas, it appears desirable that the activities of hospital and auxiliary vessels should be organized on a European basis.

In the light of the opinion of the Joint Advisory Committee on Social Problems in Deep-sea Fishing, the Commission could instruct a central body to coordinate the activities of hospital and auxiliary vessels in the major fishing grounds in the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the north-east Atlantic, the north-west Atlantic and sub-tropical waters. It is clear that the present fleet of hospital and auxiliary vessels is too small to attain this objective, even partially. Nonetheless, an immediate start must be made along these lines. The Netherlands has indicated that it is in principle prepared to consider any proposals on this subject.

It appears essential that the Joint Advisory Committee should advise and assist this central body in the elaboration and implementation of its policy.'

The committee proposed the following system:

Assistance at sea

(1) Inclusion of a doctor in the crew of certain trawlers or factory ships

The inclusion of a medical team - even a small one - on board trawlers is impossible for material and financial reasons.

(2) Community auxiliary vessels

These would be vessels which undertook no fishing operations. They would have available on board a small sick-bay with 10-20 beds and a treatment room which could be converted into an operating theatre.

The medical staff on board would consist of one doctor and one nurse.

Apart from medical assistance, in order to be fully effective, these ships should also be able to provide technical assistance and weather information to fishing vessels. Once it had been decided that these ships should be put into service, it would then be necessary to define the zones or fishing grounds where they would be operational and assign one or more vessels to each. The auxiliary vessels would then be given assistance to any vessel in need without discrimination¹.

10. At its meeting of April 1973, the committee approved a report on medical and technical assistance on the high seas², which the Commission submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) shortly afterwards; in its turn that committee thought that the document should be forwarded to the appropriate departments in the Member States.

In September 1973 a meeting took place between official government representatives who came to the following conclusions:

- (i) all acknowledged the need for appropriate medical, technical and meteorological assistance for fishing vessels on the high seas;
- (ii) it was decided that there should be an initial stage of de facto coordination of the activities of the Member States' vessels sailing in the Atlantic³ - on a (from the legal angle) voluntary basis, with the Commission's departments acting as a central base.

So much for the background. Annex II to this document contains a specimen of the sailing schedules as made available - on one occasion - to interested parties by the Commission on the basis of information received in 1975.

11. At the meeting referred to it was also decided that a Working Party on the coordination of assistance on the high seas should be set up. This is made up as follows:

¹ Points 7, 8 and 9 are taken from a report by the Joint Committee, Doc. EEC V/236/72

² Doc. EEC: V/1250/1/72

³ With the exception of Italy; Denmark and Ireland do not have any auxiliary vessels of this type

- (i) Representatives of national services and representatives of institutions or associations which own operational auxiliary vessels, and of departments which are responsible for drawing up such vessels' sailing schedules;
- (ii) Representatives of the national departments of the Member States which (still) have no operational auxiliary vessels, but whose fishing fleets operate on the high seas (Denmark and Ireland);
- (iii) Representatives of the owners of fishing vessels and representatives of the crews (Joint Committee).

This Working Party met in 1973. It can therefore be assumed that even in the early years of its existence, the Joint Committee, in association with the Commission's departments, has given a significant boost to the - obvious - cooperation between auxiliary services which could under no circumstances justifiably operate on a totally independent basis.

12. The second conclusion in the Joint Committee's 1973 report refers to the increase over a 10-year period in the Member States' fleet of auxiliary vessels to 36.

As regards this point, it was, however, decided in 1973 that the necessary experience should be acquired in the field of coordination and cooperation before consultations began on an increase in the fleet. In this respect it is worth noting that the number of vessels put into service for this kind of assistance has increased since 1972 from 6 to 15 vessels; all the parties concerned clearly recognize that the fleet must be increased on economic as well as on humanitarian grounds¹.

In view of the experience acquired over the last five or six years, the proposals which this parliamentary document calls on the Commission to make should include a programme enabling the fleet of auxiliary vessels to be gradually increased. This programme should include some kind of Community financial assistance.

13. Apart from the comments and requests made in the previous points, we can say that the Joint Committee's initiatives in this field have been satisfactorily carried out. The Commission's departments have so far published only one document, in 1975, with a total of seven tables, one of which is included as a specimen in Annex II to this document²;

¹ The accession of Spain and Portugal to the Community and the possible incorporation at a later stage of the fishing industry of the associated African States in the common fisheries policy would substantially increase the area where assistance is required

² The document is described in point 3 of this explanatory statement

Such statistics are still being distributed by the Commission, although not in the printed form adopted in 1975. The Joint Committee, which has moved on to deal with other social problems in deep-sea fishing, is now confining itself to watching the developments as they are implemented at sea.

14. As we have seen, the 1975 document has resulted in a certain amount of practical cooperation. The time now seems ripe for a more active policy. Pending a work programme, providing inter alia for an increase in the fleet of auxiliary vessels, this cooperation needs to be consolidated and extended.

The Commission needs for this purpose a specialized body working under the supervision and responsibility of the Commission. This body, which would of course be shore-based, would have to be a technical and administrative body responsible for the execution of the following four main functions:

- Coordination:
- (a) the regular preparation of a Community-wide sailing list, in consultation and collaboration with the institutions and organizations concerned, based on coordinated national sailing programmes;
 - (b) close cooperation with the Community centre for coordinating surveillance and inspection duties:
 - 1. in the introduction of additional duties for auxiliary vessels in the field of 'passive observation' and protection of the maritime environment;
 - 2. in the provision of assistance from logistic units in an emergency such as fire or explosion on board fishing vessels on the high seas and during search and rescue operations;
 - (c) in the preparation of proposals to the Commission on auxiliary vessels policy, including the expansion of the auxiliary fleet if necessary.

Communication:

- (a) the organization and operation of a radio telephone and radiotelegraph system available 24 hours a day to help establish contact between auxiliary vessels and fishing vessels forming part of fleets which are not being escorted by an auxiliary vessel of their own nationality, or to provide similar assistance for fishing vessels under way or fishing in small groups or individually and which are a long way from the nearest fishing fleet;

- (b) watch duties of three 8-hour periods per day, to monitor the positions and working conditions of auxiliary and fishing vessels.

Information:

- (a) if coordination is to be at all successful, the reluctance of fishermen from one Member State to call in an auxiliary vessel of a nationality other than their own in an emergency must be overcome.

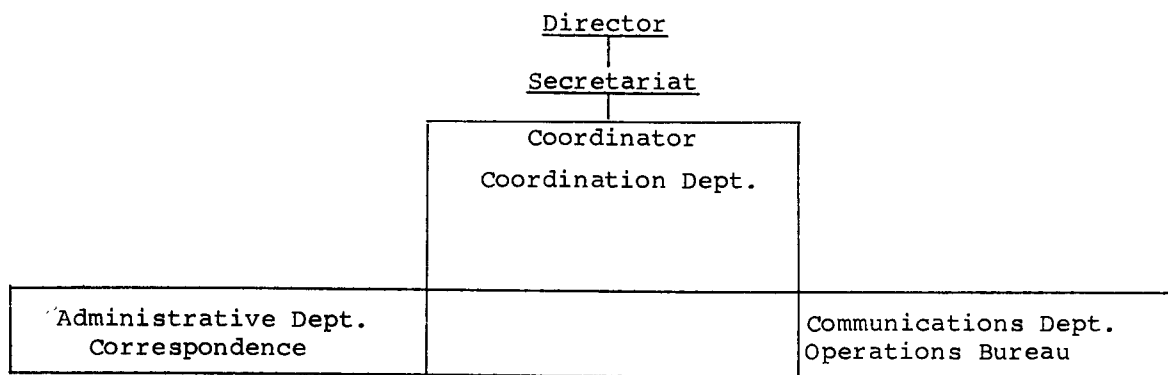
This can only be done if the crews of fishing and auxiliary vessels meet one another, at Community level, at appropriate times, thus getting to know one another and making personal contacts, whilst being briefed in a responsible and effective manner on the possible achievements of close cooperation in the field of maritime assistance;

- (b) information must also cover matters of general importance to shipping and fishing, and convince the crews of auxiliary vessels and fishing fleets that by joining forces they will help to strengthen the bond between European nations.

Administration:

- (a) providing the Commission with regular reports on the practical aspects of providing assistance;
- (b) covering all administrative requirements and dealing with correspondence.

The structure of this body could take the following form:



IV. Conclusions

15. In the first place we must conclude that the existing official cooperation and practical coordination should be continued and improved in the areas where this is possible under present conditions, i.e. on the present legal basis.

16. Given that the number of vessels available for this purpose doubled between 1970 and 1975 without any Community intervention, we may legitimately conclude that the Community does not yet need to seek to increase their numbers by putting Community vessels into service and assuming responsibility for their operation.

Indeed, the facts of the situation seem to imply that a Community legal basis could gradually be given to the voluntary cooperation between the Member States. The Commission should therefore make immediate proposals on this subject, on the one hand to consolidate the improvements in practical cooperation, and on the other to help to extend it, especially in the form of a work programme which should include Community financial and technical support for measures to encourage an increase in the fleet of auxiliary vessels.

A specific legal basis for putting fisheries auxiliary services on a Community footing is to be found in Article 9 of Regulation No. 101/76 laying down a common structural policy for the fishing industry which stipulates that the Community is required to take measures to contribute to 'the improvement, in step with technical progress, of the standard and conditions of living of the population which depends on fishing for its livelihood'¹. Confirmation of this task is also laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EEC) No. 1852/78 on an interim common measure for restricting the inshore fishing industry, which provides for support from the EAGGF for projects to improve 'the working conditions and, in particular, the safety of the workers concerned'².

In paragraph 53 of its resolution of 16 December 1977³, the European Parliament again called on the Commission 'to begin preparation of an overall social policy for the fisheries sector covering such matters as . . . safety on board ship and at sea'.

17. The question also arises here whether the Community should take over the entire official and technical apparatus necessary for the day-to-day administration of a Community system of fisheries auxiliary vessels consisting of national elements. It would seem more appropriate⁴ to delegate this task to one or more existing institutions, possibly under the supervision and on the responsibility of the Commission.

¹OJ No L 20/76, p. 21

²OJ No L 211/78, p. 30

³OJ No C 6/78, p.125

⁴See pages 15 and 19 of this document